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1868.

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H E N A ;
OR,
L I F E I N T A H I T I .

HENA;
OR,
LIFE IN TAHITI.

BY
MRS. ALFRED HORT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

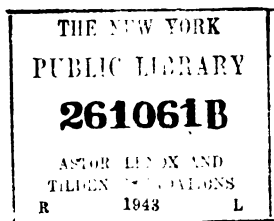
VOL. I.



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H E N A .

CHAPTER I.

PAPEETE.

THE South Pacific! What a vision of blue sky, rippling streams, and luxuriant verdure does the sound produce! Each soft vowel presents to the mind, as it were, a tropical fruit or flower, nursed to perfection by the bright rays of a glorious sun. The Polynesian isles, blessed above many others, can boast of an unequalled clime,—salubrious, exuberant, and free from venomous reptiles of every description, so common to the other tropic.

The various groups can be traversed by the devoted naturalist, without fear of fatal sting or bite. No infectious disease lurks in the delicious balmy air, or noxious exhalations rise from stagnant pools or rivulets; but wherever the eye rests, it is greeted by refreshing streams, intersecting almost every byepath,

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which invite to their cooling banks, where an immersion can occasion no evil effect, whether it be mid-day or midnight, and the atmosphere is as pure, and free from poisonous taint, as it is at early dawn.

Of the Society group, Tahiti reigns paramount, pronounced by all travellers to be "the garden of the Pacific," "the Queen of Isles." Whether she justly merits this distinction, only those can judge who are able to bring comparison to bear. Certain it is, that Tahiti can boast of being beautifully situated, possessing several striking points of interest to the true lover of nature, and adorer of God's wondrous works. Prominent among them, the lake of Vairiria, over two thousand feet above the level of the sea, the cascade of Faatahua, to say nothing of natural caves, etc. etc.

The natives, whatever they were, are now a most inoffensive, hospitable people; good-natured, easy, and indolent to an extreme; hours devoted by the civilized world to labour and exertion are passed by them in lengthy siestas. Both sexes are tall and majestic in their appearance and gait; with few exceptions, decidedly a handsome race, possessing large lustrous black eyes, glossy hair of the same hue, white, even teeth, and a frank, pleasing expression. Their dress is simple and becoming, though tending to the gaudy. It is composed of a piece of printed cotton of the gayest colours and largest design: this article is called a "pareu," which is wound round

their waist, and replaces the necessity of pantaloons. Over this a loose shirt, with a bright-tinted handkerchief, tied sailor-fashion, round the neck. Their straw-hats are generally ornamented with a wreath of flowers or leaves; and on occasions, their necks and bodies are thus adorned. The women use the "pareu" also, over which a white chemise, and long loose wrapper, something in the style of a lady's night-dress, only fuller, and with loose wide sleeves. This garment is made of every material, according to the means of the wearer, from velvet down to a six-penny print; but invariably composed of a combination of the most gorgeous colours, such as red, orange, etc. Their silk handkerchiefs are likewise tied round the neck, but left to hang square and loose over the shoulders. Their hats are usually made of bamboo or arrowroot, plaited by themselves, and superabundantly trimmed with ribbons, feathers, and flowers, which they wear in the daytime, but in the evening are replaced by wreaths of the pandanas or jasmine flower; both sexes being very partial to flowers, even having recourse to some blossom to adorn their ears, in lieu of earrings; decidedly a poetical idea, as well as an improvement on the drops of other half-civilized nations. For the above purpose, they select the red malva, and the fragrant white Cape jessamine.

When excited, or inebriated, they have a decidedly savage appearance. Their heads, shoulders, and bodies

decked fantastically with green vines, reminding one forcibly of groups of wild bacchanalians as represented in the paintings of the "Roman period." Their inordinate taste for dress has been acquired since the arrival of the missionaries upon the island. Previous to that period their sole garment was the *pareu*, made from the bark of the breadfruit or hibiscus, which is beaten into a pulp and then pressed in the sun. They have now become fearfully extravagant in their desires, and equally wasteful, particularly as regards dress. No matter how expensive the material may be, they will squat down in their own peculiar fashion, quite regardless of consequences, eating oranges, drinking cocoa-nut water, or whatever might be within their reach, totally indifferent to the chance of spoiling their robe. After once wearing an article, their appreciation of it diminishes, when usually some relative or friend becomes the more fortunate possessor; too frequently to the utter disgust of the original donor, who never intended his favours to vanish so rapidly or prove so lightly prized.

Towards each other the natives are generous and lavish to a fault; "share and share alike" appears to be their motto and maxim, which they act up to from puffs at a straw cigarette, alternating between a group of men and women, down to the pig in preparation for their meal. When a native considers he has provided more than sufficient to satisfy the appetite of his immediate family, he will walk out, call-

ing in a lusty voice to those less fortunate than himself to join him in discussing the merits of his repast. Is it necessary to add, that the invitation is accepted with the same frankness as it is offered?

Their favourite food consists of raw fish, pigs cooked entire, the *uru* (bread-fruit), *fei* (wild plantain), *taro* (a native vegetable, growing in marshy ground), and every species of shell-fish, many of which are natives of these waters solely.

With all their food they employ a sauce, made out of fermented cocoa-nut and shrimps, called *taiaro*; also another, composed of cocoa-nut and salt water, left to ferment for a considerable time. This last is called *miti noa noa*, signifying 'water of a pleasant odour.' It may prove so to the partial,—to strangers the reverse, the effluvia resembling strongly that of bilge-water: they likewise invariably substitute salt water in lieu of salt.

To partake of native food to perfection, it should be prepared in a native oven, which consists of a deep hole dug in the earth, partially filled with hot stones, into which are laid the provisions, well wrapped in leaves, then covered with more of the same, and an additional number of hot stones. The baking is thus left to progress by itself, slowly though surely, for when the various articles are taken out they are cooked to a turn, and really prove delicious. The natives possess another inestimable quality, that of cleanliness, particularly with regard to the preparation

of their food, employing their hands as little as possible, making use of leaves rather than their fingers in touching it, which cannot but be appreciated by the scrupulously delicate, and affords a good example to many a European cook. They have frequent recourse to ablutions, the bath being a luxury common to all, its delights unknown out of a tropical clime. Bathing takes place in the open river; whilst preparing for the plunge and dressing occurs under some friendly tree, whose wide-spreading branches protect the bather from the too powerful rays of the sun, as well as the gaze of stray passers.

Papeete, the principal district of Tahiti, is situated at the base of a cluster of high, irregular mountains, which are in many parts thickly wooded; here a grove of cocoa-nuts, there the orange, with forests of *aito* and *mape*, intermixed with the long rank grass and wide-leaved plantain and banana, which give an appearance of fertility to the whole island.

Despite the insignificant amount of cultivation, which merely consists of small patches of sugar-cane, sweet potato, and taro, the result seems to meet the immediate wants of the native population, whose naturally indolent habits indispose them to further exertion than is absolutely required to satisfy their present wants. For example, a native man or woman will only work until they have earned a sufficiency to purchase some article of clothing otherwise beyond their means. An amusing occurrence of this

nature fell to the lot of the writer. On the arrival of a certain man-of-war in the harbour, a native servant begged for a line of recommendation to enable his wife to procure the ship's washing. This request was readily accorded, when the following day he failed to make his usual appearance at the house, although aware that a large party was expected to breakfast, where it was his duty to wait. Messengers were dispatched immediately for him, with no effect. His wife was earning a sufficiency by washing, in which he was aiding her; the loss of a good place being apparently of no consequence to him whatever.

The usually quiet *ville*, as the French have ostentatiously dubbed Papeete, was all astir on the beautiful morning on which our present story commences. Groups of gaily-dressed native women dotted the beach, whilst wherever the eye roamed it encountered knots of individuals, telescope in hand, closely examining the horizon in answer to the signals from the semaphore, denoting the approach of a barque, which as yet no one could distinguish.

The reader will no doubt wonder what there could possibly be so interesting in such an every-day occurrence as to induce the most distant approach to an excitement *quelconque*. The solution is, that Tahiti, though centrally situated, sometimes remains an entire month deprived of all foreign intelligence, the lovely bay resembling for weeks together a deserted ball-room, her every inhabitant vainly straining his

eyes in the direction from whence issue signs capable of raising hopes and expectations to an incredible height, in fact totally beyond realization. But when were the Papeeteans bereft of their vain-glorious imaginings, relating to the arrival of some magnanimous admiral whose object it is to amuse and distribute largess in all directions, or the appearance of a new governor endowed with every quality capable of rendering his hopeful subjects satisfied (a thing unheard of), come to replace some obnoxious predecessor who has wielded his power too tyrannically, thereby gaining for himself the opprobrium of all classes, accompanied by sundry invectives, such as *canaille*, *astrego*, *urii* (dog), *puaa* (hog), etc.? It must be understood that Tahiti is outwardly French: true sentiments are so rarely got at that it would be a waste of time to approach the subject more nearly on the present occasion. Suffice it to say, all surmises proved fallacious, but the suspense was endured with the usual amount of philosophy displayed by the somewhat phlegmatic Tahitians. The barque in question proved rather an ancient one, and simply contained an assorted cargo, as also a couple of passengers, the "heroes of my tale," who doubtless would have been much amused had they known of the momentary enthusiasm they had innocently occasioned among the various classes of Papeeteans (a somewhat limited population), whilst they stood on the quarter-deck wrapped in silent admiration of the picturesque scene

the island presented as the vessel slowly glided under full sail down the coast. The stupendous mountains of wondrous shape, the most noted of which is called the "Diadem" (which it closely resembles), is supported by two cones, and forms a *coup d'œil* not easily forgotten even by the unartistic. As the Taonoa pass is reached, the beautifully undulating hills and valleys come to view, thickly covered with luxuriant foliage of every description, prominent among which is the graceful cocoa-nut, its tall straight trunk towering above everything, surmounted by its crest of drooping leaves, among which cluster the tempting fruit, serviceable in so very many ways to the world at large. As the barque enters the peaceful bay and drops anchor, Papeete for the first time is distinctly traced, and appears like a long straggling beach at the base of several high mountains, forming as it were a complete background to hem it in. The usual amount of tropical trees and shrubs are seen in all directions, yet the eye is deceived at the first glance as the shore is more nearly approached: the mountains prove it to be more distant than was at first assumed, when several streets lined with trees and tiny cottages peeping out from amidst their pleasant shade are clearly distinguished, proving most grateful to the eye of the weary traveller after a long monotonous sea voyage. Tahiti is centrally situated, possesses a rich luxuriant soil, abundance of water, and an incomparable climate, such a one as denizens of cold, foggy, rainy

countries might liken to an earthly paradise, but which without exaggeration may be designated as pure, genial, and healthy a spot as could possibly be met with. It might be made a highly-cultivated one were the proper means employed, but unhappily the French are but indifferent colonists. Tahiti became a protectorate in 1842, and as far as the cultivation of the soil is concerned, but little improvement is apparent; their mode of government intimidating rather than encouraging strangers to labour or become permanent residents of their colonies; and so long as they persevere in selecting their government employés from the naval department must the evil prevail.

A marine officer may be quite competent in guiding and instigating new manœuvres on board his ship, but encouraging commerce and directing cultivation is a totally different matter, and needs quite another system of influence, which they cannot possibly possess. Every four years there is a change in the government officers, whilst each new Governor is certain to work in an exactly opposite direction to his predecessor, rescinding old laws and forming new ones to suit partial views, thus affording no certainty whatever to those inclined to interest themselves in the improvement of the country. A civil governor would be appreciated,—some prefect for instance, who from experience would be better qualified to discharge the duties of the appointment, instead of a *capitaine de*

frégate or *vaisseau*, whose sole object seems to be in passing his time playing the great man, until he obtains his promotion, rather than displaying any interest in the prosperity of the country he governs. Tahiti receives a subsidy of 300,000 francs from the French government, pretty nearly all of which is expended in public officials selected from the various departments, the commissariat, engineers, etc. There are decidedly more government employés in little Tahiti than inhabitants. Formerly, large sums were expended upon the island, apparently most injudiciously. As politics, however, is not the intention of this little work, we will content ourselves by merely asserting that under other sway Tahiti might be rendered a terrestrial paradise.

CHAPTER II.

AN ARRIVAL.

THE barque drops her anchor, when the pilot-boat bears to shore her two passengers, whom, as they gaily touched the beach, little conceived the trials each was doomed to endure in such a tranquil spot. Odoriferous with the various blossoms from the many trees then in flower, and presenting quite a gay scene, as the native men and women flocked round, dressed in their brightest colours, to gaze with curiosity and interest on the two handsome strangers, who, in their turn, were somewhat amused at the appearance presented by what might have seemed to them a flock of macaws capable of expanding wing and taking flight, so various were the tints and gorgeous the *tout ensemble* of their dress.

Arthur Seymour and Adolphe de Lorme met for the first time at the hotel in Southampton, when in the course of conversation they found their destina-

tion to be the same; the former travelling for mere pleasure, the latter going to fulfil a term of four years in the commissariat department of Tahiti. Though as opposite in disposition and character as in personal appearance, yet these two young men became friendly and interested in each other during the long monotonous voyage, and therefore decided on residing together when once their haven was reached.

Arthur Seymour was about thirty years of age, and presented a decidedly striking appearance;—fine, regular features, dark grey eyes, and a profusion of wavy brown hair. He wore his whiskers and beard somewhat long, but left to view a well-formed mouth, denoting strong will and much determination of purpose. His expression was generally serious, but when led to smile his whole countenance lighted up so irresistibly that no doubt it had made sad havoc when it had pleased him to unbend and try his powers of fascination; although we would fain believe him incapable of any heartless action, as his broad smooth brow and kindly eye inclined one to believe him every inch a man, one who would shield and protect the weaker sex rather than crush them. In early years he had lost his parents, and was left to the guardianship of a maternal uncle, a worthy and excellent man who spared no pains in cultivating the naturally refined mind of his ward, so that when the time arrived for him to quit college, where he had become an unexceptionable scholar, his desire to travel was gratified

by a full and free permission to bend his steps in whatever direction he preferred, with the simple caution "never to forget his manhood" or "the strict principles of morality which had been inculcated in him since his earliest years." The young man promised,—not a light thing with him : it had kept him from many a false step, rendering his conscience calm and peaceful, as unruffled by a single regret. How few, how very few there are, who can look back on a past life and not wish many a deed undone, when thought whispers dismally, too late ! too late ! and how many, how very many are there who from youth to age have never harboured one praiseworthy idea or performed one laudable action ! They are to be commiserated, these poor benighted souls, who have never experienced the bliss of achieving a holy deed, which braces the weakly, exalts the lowly, and encourages the sufferer to bear present ills with a perfect knowledge of a certain reward hereafter, for the meritorious are surely God's elected and peculiar delight.

Adolphe de Lorme, on the contrary, was a perfect specimen of the dashing, pleasure-seeking French youth. *Vive la gaité* was his favourite motto, and one which he continually exemplified. His appearance, though prepossessing, failed to be so attractive as that of his English friend. His eyes and hair were raven-black, the latter free from the slightest tendency to a wave,—grievous as the knowledge might be, particularly in Papeete, where no expert coiffeur could be found

to give it that artificial twist or singe, which system he had so liberally patronized when in France. But alas! his straight though fine glossy hair had to be endured now with as much equanimity as he could command. A delicate moustache adorned his lip and lent additional brilliancy to a row of perfect teeth, and mouth as full and red as any woman's, which he greatly prided himself on, and considered the one point of attraction perfectly irresistible.

His figure was slight and *distingué*-looking, with remarkably small hands and feet for his size. He was likewise scrupulously clean in his toilet, which presented a contrast greatly to his advantage among his brother officers, who far too soon acquire the bad taste (when out of Europe) of a total disregard for dress or appearances, which not only borders on the untidy but the ridiculous. Though De Lorme seemed frequently flippant in his conversation, yet his uninterrupted flow of animal spirits tended to wile away many an otherwise tedious hour for himself and Mr. Seymour.

He was the only son of a marine officer who had commanded a corvette at the period the French were warring with the natives, and was stationed some two years at Papeete. His enthusiastic description of the island and inhabitants rendered his son nothing loath to pass a few years in so charming a retreat, despite his leaving behind him a fair *fiancée*, one charming cousin Marie, whose pretty face he never tired

extolling, and really seemed to look forward with delight to the time so appreciated by all lovers, namely, their marriage. As an employé of Government, he was entitled to, and supplied with, a cottage in a pretty little suburb called St. Émilie, comprised of one long rural lane. Each white cottage presents a rather pretty appearance, with its green blinds and small garden; a disused windmill and fountain of water, is the sole relief to the over-regular disposal of these diminutive edifices. Mr. Seymour accompanied De Lorme to his future home, on entering which the latter exclaimed, "Grand Dieu! what a hen-coop! the idea of people building such things in a wasting climate like this! Why, actually I can scarcely breathe here, Seymour."

"I must confess," replied his friend, "the apartments are none too large, and certainly could never have been intended for more than one occupant. I shall therefore go to some hotel, De Lorme, till I see something better in view."

"Nonsense, Seymour! I should die of *ennui* without you, and request as a particular favour your occupying one of my vast apartments, which remind one forcibly of our cabin on board the barque! *N'est-ce pas?* However, should you think you could make yourself more comfortable elsewhere, I cease of course to urge the matter."

"I was not bestowing a thought on that point, De Lorme, when I made the remark, being far too old

a traveller to conceive difficulties when really none exists, besides which, I fancy hotels are not celebrated here; still, I should dislike incommoding you, and as to *ennui* without me, that can easily be remedied by our being as frequently in each other's society as we wish."

"Then permit me to settle the question at once. Make yourself at home as far as space will allow for the present, and let the future take care of itself."

"So shall it be, but mind and not hesitate to bid me be off when I become *de trop*."

"Never fear, old fellow, I will help to pack your trunks when that time occurs."

For the first few days they amused themselves in strolling about; but the heat was too oppressive to venture very far in the country, and Papeete had little to boast of in the way of architecture, the few public edifices being far from remarkable, with the exception of the "*Fare apoo raa*," or native house of parliament, built of coral, and originally designed to have a dome roof, which would have added greatly to its imposing appearance; but as ideas and tastes only too frequently differ, the result was a reconstruction of the same, which gives now to the building a very different aspect to what had been intended when first conceived: carrying out the system previously referred to, the desire solely of undoing what some predecessor had done, whether to the advantage of the object in question or not was of course of no importance whatever.

L'Hôtel du Gouvernement is an iron building of two stories, with double balconies along each of the four sides, the upper one entirely venetianed in. The grounds are prettily laid out in smooth green lawns, divided by a walk for visitors to the front entrance, at the head of which stands a basin of water with a *jet d'eau*, at the back is another extensive lawn, studded with fine trees. The flower-gardens and orchard are fenced off at one side, whilst in the opposite direction are the various Government offices. The orchard produces the greatest variety of delicious fruit, many of which are not to be found elsewhere on the island, owing to the little care taken to distribute the seeds among the native or white population. The soil being capable of producing anything with the smallest amount of labour or trouble, there is no excuse for finding the market indifferently supplied.

The Queen's palace joins the Government establishments. The word palace leads one to expect something widely different to the long, low wooden building inhabited by Queen Pomare and the royal family, the sole praise due to which is its spotless purity. In general the natives understand but little of the care of furniture, in consequence of their rarely making use of any; a bed and trunk being the only articles they really need or appreciate, which one and all possesses. Pomare, however, has her palace furnished entirely in the European style, the various

articles having been sent to her from France by the former King. At present a new palace is in course of construction, a little in front of her present residence. What it may prove to be, time will show ; it presents but little prospect thus far, of either taste or style. The Club-house, or " Cercle," formerly the residence of the Vice-Governor, is a pretty spot with a stream of water running through it. Its various members are composed of officers of the garrison, who go there to imbibe absinthe, play billiards or cards, and read the various journals and periodicals found there. It has not long existed, and the probability is, will eventually form part of the Queen's grounds, whose present symmetry is considerably diminished by the rather too close proximity of the establishment referred to,—a necessary resort in a place like Papeete, affording to strangers the opportunity of forming acquaintances, and for those unoccupied, an agreeable rendezvous. But as other accessible locations might be found, which would answer the purpose as well, and not inconvenience her native Majesty, a change in position may be decided upon eventually.

It was on returning from a more lengthy promenade than usual, that Adolphe De Lorme threw himself wearily on a couch, with the exclamation of " What a confoundedly dull hole it was !"

" Rather quiet, certainly," said Mr. Seymour.

" Quiet !" cried De Lorme ; " why it is overpower-

ingly stupid and hot, and everything else that is disagreeable. But, thank God, at least some weeks have passed of my four years. How I shall ever contrive to kill time during the balance, *est une autre chose.*”

“What ! is it possible, De Lorme ? Scarcely arrived yet, you are already debating your departure. Why, not a fortnight since you were enchanted at the prospect of a long *séjour* in Tahiti.”

“Alas for fickle nature ! it is all too true, I must confess to being deucedly disappointed in everything. The scenery I find indifferent, the men dull savages, and as for the women, ye Gods ! what hideous monsters ; such flat noses and thick lips, which turns one’s stomach to look at, much less touch ; and here have I been picturing to myself, all these months back, a nation of houris. Why, I have read the most glowing description of them somewhere, by those writers who glory in vivid descriptions, colouring up their pictures highly, to effect their rapid disposal, without the slightest regard to facts or truth. Hang me if I won’t toss into the sea every book of travels I lay hands on ; never again will I waste time in reading such abominable trash,” exclaimed De Lorme, with a snap of the fingers.

“So all these invectives are the result of a few flat noses and thick lips !” said Mr. Seymour. “Why, De Lorme, what should it matter to you

what the women look like; according to your own telling, your heart has long been in the possession of another. Surely our pretty cousin cannot be so soon forgotten."

"Good Heavens, Seymour, how you do soar off! Why, Marie is in France, and here I am for nearly four interminable years, during which time, rest assured, I shall never hesitate to look at a pretty woman, when I have the luck to encounter one. But I doubt not that the chances will be rare enough, nor should I consider myself in the least culpable towards my *fiancée* in so doing. One is bound to make the most of one's time, life is so short. By-and-by I shall settle down into a most excellent *père de famille*, never fear."

"We differ widely on such subjects, De Lorme," rejoined Mr. Seymour. "To me, a man, when once engaged, owes the same allegiance to the lady of his choice as if he were her husband in reality."

"Bah! that's what I should call inconvenient; but I know you English people are sadly out of date in your opinions."

"Rather say, in advance of others."

"As you will; for my part, I prefer living according to the times. The probability is, the virtuous future will be peopled differently," he replied laughingly.

"You are a true son of France, De Lorme," said Mr. Seymour in a grave tone; "your one object, pleasure, and dislike to whatever interferes with it, and

wilfully deaf to the repeated knocks at the door of conscience. As the *père de famille* you mentioned awhile since, among other duties incidental to that grave position, you may become a regular church member, and imagine the excesses of the past must necessarily become obliterated. Alas! how many duped mortals this world contains!"

"And Tahiti, not a few I should think," interrupted De Lorme; "that is to say, if others have been as much imposed upon as I have. What my father could have been dreaming about I cannot imagine; his sight must have become impaired here, I fancy."

Mr. Seymour could not help smiling at De Lorme's tenacity; he plainly perceived he was no subject for serious argument, and therefore the more readily fell into his mood.

"The probability is, De Lorme, that the population has degenerated since your father's visit here. It frequently happens so, when a continual influx occurs in a county where immorality of all descriptions exist."

"Ah, well! perhaps so, but I shall satisfy even your 'ultra ideas,' for my intention is to lead the life of a 'perfect anchorite,' as far as women are concerned. You smile incredulously, Seymour, —think I am merely talking for talking's sake, or making a virtue of necessity. Perhaps I am, for I could never fancy one of those tawny creatures,

no matter how lustrous her eyes, or brilliant her teeth."

"I trust that you will adhere to your present resolution ; a gay Lothario I hold in utter abhorrence," replied Mr. Seymour seriously.

Forming acquaintances in Papeete is not a difficult matter, the society being rather limited. Mr. Seymour soon became on intimate terms with one family : the fact of his being an English gentleman travelling for pleasure, afforded him an easy entrée to the house of Mr. Fenton, likewise an Englishman, and an old resident of the island, who had proved successful in commerce, and was consequently in easy circumstances. Residing in a large commodious house, situated in the centre of a park, with the various tropical trees and plants studded everywhere about, lending an agreeable shade, and protecting from the sun those who reclined on mats beneath them. The family consisted of a wife and daughter, their then only surviving child, having lost two others some years previously. Mr. Seymour was charmed with his new-made friends, among whom he was an ever welcome visitor.

Mr. Fenton was a fine-looking man, of between forty and forty-five ; not a grey hair was perceptible midst his mass of dark-brown locks ; tall and portly in appearance, as well as open and placid in countenance, bespeaking as it did a mind free from all care. Never did his kindly eye beam more brightly

than when it rested on the most prized of his earthly treasures, his wife and child.

Mary Fenton bore a strong resemblance to her mother, remarkably fair, with large dark blue eyes, golden hair, and exquisitely moulded features. It was no wonder her father not only idolized but spoilt her, to his heart's content. Fortunately, however, nature endowed her with a susceptible, pliant disposition, which, being wisely directed by her sensible mother, counteracted any evil tendency, which otherwise might have arisen from another quarter. Gentle, yet firm, Mrs. Fenton was not only loved, but respected by her daughter—no matter how rebelliously inclined, (and what young girl is not so at times?) A serious regard brought her at once to reason, with the rare necessity of a harsh word, when she would throw her arms about her mother, and, with tears of deep contrition in her beautiful blue eyes, beg for forgiveness, calling herself the most ungrateful child in the world ever to dream of troubling the kind, loving parents Heaven had blessed her with.

Mr. Fenton's time was very much employed at his office, but Mary knew the exact minute of this return home, and was ever to be seen at the gate on the watch for the first kiss. The honeymoon of Mr. and Mrs. Fenton was seemingly yet in progress, and, as the former frequently avowed, would ever be so. As usual, Mary stood waiting her father's return ;

nor was her patience long taxed : in a few minutes his form became visible,—not alone, however,—Mr. Seymour, as on several previous occasions, bore him company. Mary flew down the road, and held up her cherry lips to receive the usual reward.

“Nothing but a cold shake of the hand for an elderly gentleman like me, Mary? Surely you might award me a friendly caress likewise,” said Mr. Seymour in a half-jesting tone.

“Well, Papa! what do you think of a request of this nature being made right before your face?” said Mary.

“Perhaps you would have preferred it behind his back—hey, little one?” interrupted Mr. Seymour, trying to catch her hand.

“I really don’t consider it worth my while replying to such rude speeches,” said Mary, evading him. “Papa, I thought you told me Mr. Seymour was a perfect specimen of a thorough English gentleman.”

“What then, my pet?”

“Simply that I consider Englishmen in general must be very presuming.”

“Are you really serious, Mary, or are you only pretending?” asked Mr. Seymour.

“I mean every word I say,” she called out, as she bounded back to the house. Her mother noticed her heightened colour, and inquired the cause.

“That horrid Mr. Seymour teasing me, as he always does.”

"Why, what could he have found time to say, Mary? He is but just coming in."

"I can't bear his treating me as if I were a child," she replied petulantly, "and cannot make him understand that I dislike it. Mamma, darling, do tell me how I can prevent his doing so."

"By not being petulant, in the first place, Mary; and if you really feel the young lady you wish to appear, you must endeavour to act in a less childish way than you generally do," replied her mother good-humouredly.

But that was more than Mary could well act up to. Although near fifteen years of age, she appeared a perfect child in looks and manners. It was therefore the less strange that Mr. Seymour from the beginning of their acquaintance treated her as one. But like all very young girls, Mary's desire was to be thought older than she really was. Mr. Seymour's mode of addressing her was therefore the more humbling to her youthful dignity. In some measure he perceived this, but was simply amused by it. After shaking hands with Mrs. Fenton, he once more turned towards Mary with a beaming smile.

"Come, shall we make a compact, little lady?"

"That depends on its nature," said Mary gravely.

"What say you, then, to granting me the privileges of an elder brother?"

"I never had one, so I am at a loss to know what they may be."

"Nor I a sister, yet I can imagine the tie a most agreeable one. Much affection, perfect confidence, as well as the sympathizer in each other's pleasures or woes: is it not a pretty picture, Mary?"

"No; I prefer confiding in Mamma or Papa to a perfect stranger."

"Mrs. Fenton, what can I do to please your ungracious daughter?"

"Don't heed her, Mr. Seymour; I have no doubt she would miss even your teasing, were you to change your tactics, or absent yourself for any length of time."

"Would you miss me, Mary, under such circumstances?"

"On Papa's account I might, on my own I should not like to say," said Mary, half-inclined to laugh.

Mrs. Fenton, by way of changing the conversation, remarked, "that Mr. De Lorme had called a few days ago, and appeared a very pleasant young man."

"He is so, and quite a good musician," replied Mr. Seymour."

"Oh, Papa, if that is the case, do ask him up some evening; I should so much like to hear him sing and play!" cried Mary, her momentary anger forgotten.

"Certainly, my dear, if you wish it; but there is no great hurry, I suppose."

After dinner Mr. Seymour took leave, remarking however that he might return at a later hour. Mary

watched him pass the gate, and turning to her mother she said, "I wonder why Mr. Seymour left so soon. Do you think he could have been angry with me, Mamma?"

"With you, my child? what a silly idea! I suppose he had some engagement."

"Had he, Papa?"

"Not that I know of, nor do I find it very difficult to divine what took him off."

"You don't?" cried Mary, opening wide her eyes. "Then tell me, like a good darling that you are."

"Ah! you coxer, that is the way you worm out my secrets."

"Ah! it is a secret, then?"

"So it would appear; otherwise I suppose Mr. Seymour would have explained the motive of his early withdrawal," replied her father.

Mary set herself to imagining all sorts of reasons but the right one, until her mind was relieved by the return of the gentleman in question, accompanied by De Lorme.

"Have I pleased you at last, Mary, and are we once more friends?" he slyly inquired.

"Yes," she said frankly, "you are after all very thoughtful and kind," and she looked up in his face with an irresistible smile of thanks and satisfaction.

"One word of caution, my pretty one: never look at me thus when we are alone, for I should be unable to resist taking what I asked for to-day."

Mary awarded him no further reply than a look of indignation, as she moved from his side.

As Mr. Seymour had asserted, De Lorme was an excellent musician, and possessed a splendid voice, added to his agreeable manners and prepossessing exterior, rendered him quite a desirable acquaintance.

Mary, being passionately fond of music, passed a delightful evening, in the course of which she whispered to Mr. Seymour that she hoped they would be of frequent occurrence, begging him at the same time to make Mr. De Lorme accompany him very often to the house.

"In doing so, you will have to be bored by me as well: remember this, Mary."

"Unfortunately I do, but it cannot be helped; every rose has its thorn. Ah! Sir, you fancied I was going to protest, but you see you were mistaken," and she clapped her hands in childish glee.

"True, I did give you credit for a little more *reconnaissance*; but never heed, I will yet contrive to be equal with you," he replied, shaking his finger menacingly at her.

As Mary desired, De Lorme continued to visit them occasionally, and seemed quite fascinated with the Fentons, who, he remarked to Mr. Seymour, reminded him of home. "I could never tire of such acquaintances; Mr. and Mrs. Fenton are truly charming, and as to Miss Mary, she is as beautiful, fresh, and innocent as any humming-bird; quite an

English style of beauty, however, and I must confess to having a preference for brunettes. What can surpass the flashes of a dark eye?"

"Both are very well in their way," replied Mr. Seymour; "much as I have travelled, and much as I have seen of the fair sex of foreign lands, I have never encountered abroad anything more attractive than what I have met with at home,—according to my taste, be it well understood, for whenever I picture to myself a lovely, lovable girl, she is invariably endowed with deep blue eyes and golden hair, such as angels are pictured with."

"It appears to me, Seymour, you must have a fair divinity of the sort, waiting you in England, which causes you to be so enthusiastic on the subject."

"Not at all, I am simply expressing an opinion; and as we generally choose the opposite to what we fancy we would, the probability is that I may eventually be united to some dark-eyed one."

The above conversation took place during one of their morning walks, on the road to Faatahua. They had been diverging in and out those small bye-paths used by the natives to pass from the main road to their bamboo houses. After striking off in several contrary directions, they suddenly found themselves by the side of a clear, limpid stream. An exclamation drew their attention to the direction from whence the sound issued, when their eyes rested on two young girls bathing.

"*Sapristi*, Seymour, we are in luck," whispered De Lorme, excited at once. "What a lovely girl that is!" and his gaze became riveted on her. She was indeed beautiful: large languishing black eyes, very long lashes, with a small mouth, and teeth resembling a row of pearls, so small, white, and even were they. Her hair was as black as jet, and hung in a profusion of glossy ringlets, which not even the wetting they had received, could succeed in straightening out. Her dress, unfortunately, was rather thin for the present occasion, and now clung so tightly round her well-formed limbs as to display through the clear water her entire figure. She was only too well aware of the appearance she must be presenting to the two strange gentlemen, the knowledge of which produced an expression of such intense pain, and injured modesty, at De Lorme's persistent gaze, that it caused Mr. Seymour to endeavour to draw him away. But for a few seconds his efforts proved ineffectual, until indeed an open avowal of disgust and annoyance on his part recalled the gentleman's wandering senses. He turned and moved away from the all too fascinating sight, giving vent, however, the while to the most enthusiastic expressions of delight at the exquisite vision which had momentarily gladdened his eyes. Soon they were hidden from sight by the thick foliage, when the darker and plainer girl of the two burst forth into a merry, ringing laugh.

"Why, Hena, what a picture of distress you look!"

"And is it any wonder, Taai, when we have been gazed upon so rudely by that stranger?"

"Why don't you say 'those strangers'? were there not two of them?"

"Because only one looked upon us in that horrid way;" and she shudderingly covered her face with her hands.

"And what did he see, pray, different from what he has himself, a pair of legs? He can look at mine again for aught I care;" and the reckless girl splashed about on the surface of the water like any young duck.

"Oh, Taai, how can you express yourself so unbecomingly? Sister Agatha would indeed be shocked to hear you," said Hena seriously.

"I never intended she should, my dear; but I declare, Hena, you are beginning to preach as forcibly as the little nun herself, whilst you are quite as good and pretty. What say you to taking the veil and having a class yourself?" laughed Taai.

"Do be serious for once, Taai. Ah me! I suppose we must bid good-bye to our delicious bathing here," she said with a deep sigh of regret.

"And why, pray? Do you conclude those people intend making a point of coming here daily for the express purpose of seeing us?"

"I am afraid to risk it, as it strikes me that creature will yet come again."

"Then let him do so, if it suits him ; for my part I cannot see where the crime is, when one is dressed."

"You call this dressed, Taai ? I can see you. Now look at me." Taai accordingly turned her eyes towards Hena, when she exclaimed, "I now know what attracted the young Frenchman's attention," and she pointed to that part of Hena's dress which must have been torn in the exertion of bathing, disclosing some portion of her form.

"Oh, Taai, what shall I do?" and the large tears began to course each other down her face.

When Taai perceived how truly distressed Hena was, she at once abandoned her thoughtless speeches to words of consolation.

"Come, don't think any more about the matter, Hena dear," she urged ; "of course those gentlemen were aware that we imagined ourselves alone, and I shall take good care they never show their faces here again, to mar our pleasure."

During the process of making their simple toilet under the trees, Taai inquired of Hena whether she did not find the strangers handsome.

"I can't say, I was so confused, but the one I found detestable."

"They are the new arrivals I told you about, Hena ; I wonder whether they have gone further into the valley."

"I sincerely hope they have gone out of it, for I never want to lay eyes again on the man who looked

so impertinently at me," she said indignantly, and her usually soft eyes flashed angrily.

"After all, Hena, he is scarcely to be blamed," returned Taai good-humouredly; "it is not every day such a pretty girl as you can be met with. I'll be bound Matoha himself could not have resisted, had he been present."

"Nonsense, Taai! does he not know where we bathe, and when we do so? Yet have you ever detected him loitering around?" inquired Hena gravely.

"No, because he expects to make you his wife one of these days. He can therefore afford to wait till he bathes with you." (Native fashion.)

"Taai, I at times think you rattle on in this strain to annoy me. You know perfectly well that partial as I am to Matoha, I never intend marrying him. No, never."

"Never is a long while, Hena," replied Taai in a serious tone, "particularly when all your friends desire it; and I am sure you may go further and fare worse. Matoha is quite as handsome a man as can be found on the island."

"I allow it all, even to his being far superior to me in position. That does not alter my determination. I am dark enough myself, without marrying one darker."

During the above conversation they had been bending their steps towards a picturesque retreat, composed by trailing parasites from one branch of a tree

to another, which formed quite a sheltered nook ; a sort of harbour, indeed, warding off the rays of the sun or gaze of intruders. It was a favourite spot with both girls, where they usually passed several hours each day ; carrying hither their meals, on certain occasions, which usually ended in a lark, aided and abetted by Matoha, who was always ready with his services, in the hopes of receiving a kind word or smile from the queen of his heart, for whom every pulse in his frame quickened at her slightest touch. She had been his preference ever since he knew how to distinguish one girl from another.

Matoha was a young chief who had known Hena from her earliest years, constituting himself her youthful protector and defender when occasion required. Many and many a time had he carried her, when weary from an unusually lengthy stroll among the mountains, with other young people of her own age. For her he climbed the most dangerous rocks, to gather a wished-for flower or berry. She and Taai frequently accompanied him in his fishing excursions, but never was he known to associate with other girls, whose society he seemed rather to avoid than to seek. Taai he submitted to on account of Hena, from whom she was inseparable ; she was likewise distantly related to himself. His sympathies, however, were alone bestowed on the orphan Hena, who as a babe was adopted by the mother of Taai. It was the old story. A French officer some years

previously had seduced a beautiful girl, almost a child in years, with whom he lived until recalled to France. The poor deluded creature fancied herself his wife, as the natives usually do under such circumstances, and never dreamed of a final separation from the husband she idolized. Others in her neighbourhood ill-treated and neglected their native women, but he was all loving-kindness and attention, lavishing favours of every description on her, according as the fancy took him. The contrast was therefore in his favour, and the sorrow the greater when the leave-taking took place, and she and her babe, abandoned as it were, and left to grapple with a cold hard world. Many friends advised her to cheer up and take another husband; she was too young and pretty to waste her charms pining over the irretrievable past. In answer to which, she sadly shook her head, and sat alone, dwelling on the happiness of days gone by, never more to be renewed for her. Alas! never more; for in two short years from the day she was forsaken she was laid in her lowly grave, all heartburnings and repinings over. The young Hena was a beautiful babe from its birth, whom many offered to adopt after her mother's death. But Metua, the mother of Taai, positively refused to part with the child, who had been carried to her house when the mother was dying; which seemed to the good woman a sign that Providence intended here there to remain, at which she was nothing loath, saying, "she would

make a nice companion for Taai," her senior by two years, and eventually whispers were current, that of the two children Metua loved Hena the better,—a custom very general among the natives, who frequently give away their own children, adopting others in their place, on whom they lavish all their affection and earthly possessions, to the total disregard of their natural offspring, who, when once parted with, seem to have their very existence ignored.

Taai was often told by indignant friends, of her mother's preference for the strange child, which she would laugh at, saying it was all right; she herself loved Hena better than anybody else in the world. She always made a point of giving her the larger share of anything to be divided between them; generosity being a prominent trait in the native character, from the child upwards. When Hena occasionally got into trouble, it was Taai who invariably shielded and protected her. Were they caught in a storm, Taai would unhesitatingly divest herself of raiment for the protection of Hena; and thus they grew up staunch friends, never quarrelling, but perfect sympathizers in each other's little annoyances. A separation from Hena at any future period was an event Taai never dreamed of, or believed could possibly occur. She, as well as Hena, had been partially educated at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph, of the order of 'Picpus.' Every praise is

due to the ladies of this establishment, whose unremitting care, patience, and perseverance have done so much for the youth of Tahiti, inculcating them with principles they formerly did not possess; such as a modest, tidy appearance, and desire to be usefully employed. Any of their pupils may readily be recognized by their neat dress. Sewing and embroidery, in all its branches, is taught them, as well as the French language, gratis. Taai, who was neither tractable nor studiously inclined, failed to derive much benefit from their teachings. Not so Hena, whose happiest moments were passed in their orderly, picturesque, and hallowed retreat. Her favourite teacher was Sœur Agatha. After class hours, they would sit together in some sheltered spot, watching the geese and ducks float on the water of a wide beautiful stream, running in a serpentine manner through the convent grounds, over which had been erected a miniature bridge. The smooth green lawns, dotted with handsome trees, under which browsed the cows and calves, as well as sheep and goats; for every description of useful animal and bird are there to be found, and where, without exception, one and all seemed perfectly content with their lot. Such a sense of calm tranquillity pervades the place, which none felt more forcibly than Hena, who could there, while away hours in silent communion, to the utter astonishment of Taai, who was sometimes even awed by Hena's peculiar disposition, as unlike any

other girl of her age. Sœur Agatha alone appeared to understand her dreamy nature, and soon became attached to the sensitive, timid girl, who seemed to keep aloof from all but Taai. She gradually gained her confidence, and learned the wild cravings of her heart, the result of an ardent nature; the history of her birth having tinged her character with a certain melancholy, which proved attractive to the young nun, who was herself rather inclined that way.

Their subject of conversation was anything but varied, the one never tired of speaking, the other of listening.

"The idea of my being ignorant of my father's very existence, *ma sœur*, is it not hard?" murmured forth Hena, after a rather lengthy silence one day as they sat together.

"Perhaps it would be as well not to dwell on this painful subject, my dear child," replied the young nun, scarcely more than a child herself in years, yet inclined to act a mother's part by her pupils in general.

"Yet he might have made some inquiry about me; don't you think so, *ma sœur*?"

"Hena, my dear, all we can do is to pray fervently and repeatedly for your erring parent, and trust he may have repented long since of his grievous sins," remarked the young nun solemnly.

"Ah, dear me, I have ever acted upon your good advice, *ma sœur*, but it brings me no peace; ever since I learned that other children had mothers and

fathers have I craved to see mine; my mother I knew was dead, but my father,—all my life have I prayed to see or hear of him, without effect; it is a thorn which never ceases pricking me, do what I may," said Hena with a deep sigh.

"Have you any great affection for him, Hena, that you cling so tenaciously to his memory even?" inquired Sœur Agathe.

"Not now, oh, not now; he has neglected me too long; but how devotedly I could have loved him had he only permitted me, even you, *ma sœur*, may not comprehend. Mitua tells me he was so handsome, and kind to my poor mother. I can believe the former, but never the latter, otherwise how could he ever abandon her as he did, to die of a broken heart? My poor, poor mother! who knows but I may share her fate sooner or later?"

"That is scarcely probable, Hena, unless the teachings you have received here have been sadly thrown away; otherwise you would never dream of attaching yourself so solely and heedlessly to sinful man, when your deepest affection is alone due to your Maker," replied her grave Mentor.

Such conversations as these had been very frequent during Hena's regular attendance at the convent; now they were less so, although she still occasionally visited there and renewed their *tête-à-têtes*, which generally ended in a serious admonition from her thoughtful monitress.

It was a considerable relief to Hena, however, to pour out her feelings thus when opportunity allowed, but it nevertheless did not prevent her brooding despondingly over her fate, till she wished, she too had died with her mother, years ago.

She would picture to herself her father married, and surrounded by other children, on whom he lavished all his affection, to her utter exclusion. Thus he had neither the desire nor will to recall to his tardy remembrance the child of his youthful follies; probably had long since forgotten her very existence. Such heartless actions are of daily occurrence,—girls seduced to gratify a passing whim or passion, and children born, then cast aside, as if they were scarcely human beings, or, worse still, made away with to hide their parents' shame.

Is it not appalling to think, that it requires but a few words pronounced by an official, to invest the offspring of such ceremony with a father's entire affection, to say nothing of the claims on his fortune (if he possess any); whereas the equally innocent child of passion, called into existence unasked, becomes, in nine cases out of ten, an abandoned waif, reviled and denied by the author of its miserable being, begrudged a passing recognition, much less a kind word or coin from the well-filled purse, legally the property of the little destitute's more fortunate brothers and sisters. Thus it would seem that the law alone gives rise to love, pure hallowed love, which the instincts of nature fail

to do. Is it so, or is it that society, civilized society, makes the distinction, and accepts the results, no matter how unworthy? In the eyes of the Almighty, who is all justice and loving-kindness, actions of the like nature must surely be unacceptable; it cannot be that a mere ceremony can alter the heart's instincts, or custom render a child less a human being, a man less a father. No doubt such deeds will be perpetrated till the end of time; but if society would attach the stigma to the author rather than the offspring of illicit passion, examples of man's perfidy and woman's weakness might be of far rarer occurrence.

When Hena and Taai reached their verdant bower, they were perfectly astonished to find the two strange gentlemen there before them, comfortably ensconced on mats, smoking. Taai was amused, so laughingly joined them, whereas Hena drew back confused and annoyed. Both De Lorme and Mr. Seymour arose at once and apologized for their intrusion, saying it looked so cool and inviting after a long walk that they had been unable to resist the temptation of entering and reposing there awhile.

Hena listened with downcast eyes, looking ravishingly beautiful, as De Lorme thought, her attitude unstudied yet graceful, her cheek slightly tinged with the water still dripping from the ends of her profusion of glossy ringlets; her hands were loosely folded before her, and were not the least of her many attractions, so small, plump, and tapering were they.

Even Mr. Seymour was struck with her modest appearance, yet inwardly regretted making the discovery, which would certainly have puzzled De Lorme not a little, had he guessed what was passing in his mind; but his eyes were too well occupied to heed his friend, who was not ignorant of the fact, or the more satisfied with the result of their day's warning, and in consequence, most certainly De Lorme would have called him a perfect Goth had he divined what Mr. Seymour thought on the subject of their discovering Hena. Silence could no longer be endured by De Lorme, who was dying to hear her voice; speak he was determined she should. "Pray, Mademoiselle, do not remain without; this fairy bower must claim you as its queen, and is everyway worthy its mistress. Could I suppose your silence was occasioned by our unwelcome presence, we would withdraw instantly: Mademoiselle has but to pronounce the word."

Hena was at a loss what to say or do, it not being in the native character to treat strangers uncivilly, yet there was something in De Lorme's looks and manners that repelled her. For the first time she turned her eyes on Mr. Seymour and instinctively felt that the two young men were as widely opposite in character as in looks. All grave and quiet as Mr. Seymour appeared, she was pleased with him, quickly recalled how he had drawn De Lorme away, not only displaying an innate delicacy himself, but likewise an appreciation of her feelings at her

exposé; still he kept aloof, not presuming to force his conversation as his officious friend was doing, in vainly endeavouring to scrape an acquaintance which she vaguely determined should not succeed. These thoughts flashed through her mind in less time than it takes to note them down, when the uncertainty of how she ought to act was relieved by the timely appearance of the handsome young chief "Matoha." Tall and athletic, with large piercing black eyes, which, however, softened down wonderfully when he addressed Hena. A handsome moustache likewise adorned his lip; his mouth was large but well-shaped, with a regular row of white teeth, which he displayed on all occasions; his hair he wore cropped close to the head, which became his type well.

Hena approached him at once with manifest pleasure, and explained away in a hurried manner his surprise at seeing the strangers where they were. De Lorme did not at all relish the addition to their party, as the contraction of his brow indicated, when he perceived the friendly terms evidently existing between him and the fair young half-caste.

They were conversing rapidly in the native language, which sounded beautifully soft and agreeable to De Lorme's ears, which lay in the sweetly modulated voice of Hena, perhaps one of the most irresistible charms about her, and the heart must indeed have been hard that could turn from its pleadings.

Matoha stood before her all rapt attention, his

eyes wandering occasionally from the face he loved and prized above all earthly things to the inmates of the Bower, with a dissatisfied look at those whom he considered impertinent intruders.

"Who is that individual?" impatiently exclaimed De Lorme, as he turned towards Taai.

She looked up astonished at his strange tone, and perceived he looked not less so; something had evidently ruffled him, though what that was she of course was at a loss to imagine.

"Who is that man? Can you not reply to a question when it is put you?"

"Matoha," coolly replied Taai.

"Be a little more explicit, my good girl; I am about as wise now as I was before I asked you."

Taai shrugged her shoulders for all answer.

"Is he that young girl's brother?"

The gist of these questions began to dawn on Taai, who was not a "native" for nothing.

"No; Hena has no blood-relations that she knows of; she is an orphan, whom my mother adopted when a little baby."

"This Matoha appears particularly free and easy with Hena, as you call her, and a beautiful name it is,—don't you think so, Seymour?"

"Rather pretty," he replied laconically; "but don't you think we had better be bending our steps homeward, De Lorme?"

"Not till I can persuade that little divinity into

addressing me a few words ; she does not appear so chary towards others," he remarked significantly.

"Why should she? Her present companion is doubtless an old friend, with whom she can converse freely," suggested Mr. Seymour. "Come, De Lorme, don't be absurd. See, she is about quitting our vicinity, in disgust, probably, at our lengthened stay where we are not wanted."

To De Lorme's utter dismay, she actually walked off with Matoha, without deigning either of them a passing notice.

"Look here, girl," said De Lorme.

"My name is Taai," she quietly interposed.

"Well, then, Taai, why does Hena hurry off in that fashion? I should like to have had a little conversation with her."

"Perhaps she did not desire it," replied Taai, playing with the mat.

"Does she object to our being here, think you?"

"Very likely," said Taai laconically.

"Pooh, pooh! I don't believe a word about it. That fellow wiled her away—nothing more. Why, I addressed her as if she were a princess. What I said was most civil, I am sure ; not a word that could give her umbrage," said De Lorme angrily.

"Nor your conduct while we were in the water, I suppose," bravely spoke up Taai. "You were very rude to stare at Hena as you did. I should not have cared for myself, but she is very different to one of

us; her whiter skin makes her more sensitive and proud. She was ashamed to be seen bathing at all, but when you found her dress torn into the bargain she cried enough about it, I can tell you. Ah! you made a great mistake in acting as you did; Hena will not easily forget your rudeness. What a difference between you and Matoha! He knows well enough where we bathe, but never has he approached the spot whilst we are there, although he could often do it."

"Matoha is a lucky fellow," sighed De Lorme.

"I can't say much as to his luck, but I know he is as good and considerate as he is handsome."

"Handsome, Taai! surely you are joking; why he is not even good-looking. I know you have better taste than to admire such a tawny face as his," said De Lorme persuasively.

"He is trying to come it over me, but it is no go," thought Taai. "You will never be half as handsome, much as you think of yourself," she said aloud.

"Now you are becoming personal, so I shall take my friend's hint, and leave you to the enjoyment of your own charming society; it is *au revoir*, however, not *adieu* remember, for good friends we shall yet become. By the bye, can you put us in the right road out of this labyrinth, which we got into by accident? I should, however, like to know the exact way out."

Taai rose at once, and lightly tripped on before them. She was a pretty native girl, rather dark, but possessing the usual lustrous eye and brilliant teeth

of her race. In figure she was as erect as any young poplar, whilst her frank manner and joyous countenance rendered her a favourite with all who knew her.

The main road was much nearer than De Lorme imagined; and as Taai indicated their route back to Papeete, she presented each gentleman with a fragrant white jasmine which had been pending from her ears, and with a cheerful "yer honor" (good bye) sped rapidly back to where she knew Hena and Matoha were sure to be found, namely a few paces from the bower.

"I should have prized this far more had it been given me by the other siren," remarked De Lorme, as he glanced down on the flower Taai had given him.

"Do you think it would have altered its shape or perfume?" inquired Mr. Seymour, smiling at De Lorme's sudden *penchant*.

"Yes, I do; anything coming from a beautiful girl possesses a nameless charm, at least in my eyes; whereas this blossom now feels greasy, and is redolent with horrid cocoa-nut oil; so here it goes," and he flung it from him in evident disgust.

"Oh, for the prejudiced man!" laughed Mr. Seymour. "You had better check this fancy of yours in the bud, De Lorme; for, if I mistake not, this Matoha is Hena's lover, and not an indifferent one either."

"Who cares? I suppose one can admire a pretty girl without ulterior motives?" replied De Lorme, in a slightly impatient tone.

"Certainly, my friend; I am the last in the world to doubt that fact. But, as I could not help remarking your evident annoyance at being unable to obtain a regard or word from this fair young half-caste, I thought I would simply throw in a caution."

"None was needed," he replied curtly.

"Well, well, De Lorme, I see it is useless offering you advice on such subjects; I shall therefore endeavour to hold my peace in the future."

"I never saw any one like you, Seymour, for looking on the wrong side of things. Now, as to this Matoha being Hena's lover, I don't believe a word of it. Never would a girl like her, display the bad taste of lavishing her affections on such a black scowling fellow."

"There you are unjust, De Lorme, or wilfully blind; for no one with the slightest judgment can deny, that Matoha is a splendid specimen of the native chief,—tall and muscular, with a fine head, and good expression of physiognomy. A girl in Hena's place must be indeed ambitious to desire more. And that he is evidently attached to her there can be no doubt, for I was watching their meeting, and detected undisguised signs of admiration on his part, and an apparent sense of protection on hers when he was by."

"Your picture would fail to intimidate or deter me, had I a desire to wrest his prize from him," laughed De Lorme.

"So much the worse, for I must be woefully mistaken in his character, if he would not protect his 'dove' from the vulture's claws, come what may. She evidently spoke to him of your rudeness in gazing at her as you did, judging of the far from friendly eye he cast occasionally in your direction."

"*Mille tonnerres*, Seymour! you are enough to exhaust the patience of any man living, whereas I never was endowed with a superabundance of that quality. As to my rudeness, as you are pleased to term it, I candidly confess a like occasion would meet with a like result. I am no Joseph, nor do I wish to ape one voluntarily. Shut my eyes on a beautiful vision, in or out of the water, when I could open them! —never!"

CHAPTER III.

JAQUES.

DE LORME's memory was very tenacious where women were concerned ; the result was an unending dream of the young half-caste. She was perpetually before his mind's eye, in every sort of attractive position and humour ; but he steadily abstained from alluding to her in Mr. Seymour's presence. Several times he had returned to the bower alone, but without result : a melancholy silence reigned around, unbroken by human voice ; nothing could be discerned or heard, but the water of the Tatawa river as it rushed wildly over the rocks, and reminded him of what had been.

His servant was a soldier named Jaques, an active, good-natured fellow, who served his masters, one and all faithfully ; their interest and his seemed a common cause ; to gratify their whims, no matter of what nature, as much his duty, as it was to tidy up their room or prepare their meal. Of the two gentlemen

he now served, Mr. Seymour was decidedly his favourite, from the fact of De Lorme's being oftentimes impetuous and domineering,—traits rarely endured with equanimity by an attendant, no matter how servile, and Jaques was far from being this; therefore thoroughly appreciated Mr. Seymour's calm unchangeable disposition, as polite in his demands, as he was in his acknowledgment of attentions received. Jaques was frequently heard to exclaim, "There goes a gentleman, every inch of him; nothing like serving an English master after all! When my term of service expires, I will follow that one's fortunes to the world's end, if he will have me." In his enthusiasm he quite forgot he spoke aloud, and might be overheard. On one of these occasions, he was startled by De Lorme's putting his head in at the kitchen door, when down went his pipe with a crash. "What a stupid fool I am, to talk aloud and break my pipe!" he muttered, scratching his head, when De Lorme inquired who he was conversing with. "It was only to Pussy, the young jade; she has had another litter of six, Sir, this very morning; and I was cautioning her against presenting us with so many the next time; the place swarms with her young ones."

"That is strange; I never by any chance meet with one," said De Lorme; "and as to rats, they kick up a fearful row at night overhead. You ought to feed the cats less, and to keep some of them above;

they will find lots to eat there, never fear, if they are worth anything."

"I will, Sir, I will," promptly replied Jaques, smiling inwardly at his outrageous lie being believed; the pussy in question being an old worn-out tom-cat, who made his appearance at rare intervals to merely satisfy hunger by stealing what might be within his reach, when a well-directed missile of some description, aimed by the expert hand of Jaques, would frighten him out of the neighbourhood, for a time at least.

"Follow me, Jaques, I have a question to put to you," said De Lorme, leading the way.

"What the d—l is up?" thought Jaques; "I hope he did not overhear me after all."

"Shut the door," said De Lorme; "and now tell me if you have ever met with two girls, one called Hena and the other Taai?"

"Yes, Sir, I know them both," quickly rejoined Jaques, guessing what was going to follow, and delighted on any terms to ingratiate himself with his master, whom for a moment he feared had caught him *en flagrant délit*.

"Tell me what you know about them," said De Lorme hurriedly, "but do not speak too loud."

"I understand, Sir," replied Jaques, acknowledging by another look his significant hint.

"Say on, then, and be quick about it."

"Well, then, Sir, all I know about them is that

Taai is as good a girl as can well be found, outspoken, and full of merriment as a gnat ; I have known her for this many a day."

" Hang it, man, cease about her ; the one I want information of, is the other, Hena. Has she any lover ?" he inquired, coming to the point at once.

" Not that I know of, Sir."

" Then what the d—l do you know, after all ?"

" Not much, Sir, certainly ; but what I do know is, that she is a very well-conducted young person, and has been brought up by the sisters of St. Joseph, who think the world and all of her. She is well protected, too, so there is no danger of her ever coming to harm's way," he added with a dash of spite, hurt as he had been at his master's impatient tone.

" She is an orphan, I understand ?"

" Yes, Sir. Her father was an officer ; he left the mother when Hena was a mere infant ; she soon died of a broken heart at his desertion,—never held up her head after it, poor thing. The mother of Taai then adopted the baby. Mitua was a kind-hearted woman, who soon loved the little orphan better than her own child,—so people said, and I believe it likely myself ; for the natives are apt to forget their own flesh and blood for strangers, odd as it may appear, Sir. Mitua may well be proud of Hena, however, for she is by far the prettiest girl on the island," concluded Jaques with warmth.

" I do not in the least doubt it," replied De

Lorme, "and that was the reason I wish to be satisfied on certain points; for instance, this chief Matoha, who is he?"

"A relation of Matua's, Sir; he has been brought up with the two girls; loves Hena very much, I believe; and their friends desire to see them united; but Hena objects to it entirely, on account of his being a pure native they seem to think."

"She shows her good sense," cried De Lorme, with perceptible pleasure in his tone, which was not lost upon the astute Jaques.

"Have you seen her, Sir?" he inquired respectfully.

"Casually I did. But that will do, Jaques; you can now withdraw; when I need your services I will claim them. But be careful to keep what has passed to yourself."

"Never fear, Sir," he replied, as he left the room with a low whistle.

Mr. Seymour sat reading in his room, with a cigar in his mouth, that never-failing friend and companion to the solitary, when he unwillingly became acquainted with the conversation in the next apartment, the slightness of the partitions proving a conveyer rather than abstracter of sound. It annoyed him not a little, these questions and answers, for what motive but one could induce them? And as he threw his cigar impatiently out of the window, he arose, and paced the room with sufficient energy to

have attracted the attention of any one less absorbed than the parties holding, to him, such a disgusting *tête-à-tête* a few feet distant from him. He soon became lost in painful thought, as he recalled the young half-caste, from first to last, on the only day he had seen her, when she presented the personification of childish innocence, her rounded form exposed to view, through the limpid stream. Then her unutterable anguish at the look of passionate admiration De Lorme cast upon her, exhibited an innate delicacy on her part, which he could not but acknowledge and approve of, and as, lastly, she appeared before them, modestly standing back, with downcast eyes and loosely folded hands, displaying by her silence a natural resentment at what had transpired, proved that she was neither wanting in refined feelings nor stamina. And were there not already enough lost characters on the small island, without adding to the list, which he feared very much was in contemplation by this young *roué*, who, in seeking a pastime, troubled himself but little as to results? He could not but doubt that the vulture he had theoretically alluded to was not soaring so very far off, and, unless particularly wary, the poor little dove might yet get entangled in his claws.

At dinner he informed De Lorme how he had overheard his conversation with Jaques.

“Did you? Well, it matters not; I simply inquired out of curiosity,” replied De Lorme, colouring visibly,

and cleverly changing the conversation; neither of which actions were lost on Mr. Seymour, impassible as he continued to look.

"Are you good for the Fentons' this evening, Seymour?" he inquired, as he lay in a commodious *fauteuil*, lazily smoking his meerschaum.

"Always at your service, De Lorme, when anything sensible is in view."

"When I ask you to join me in aught else, *mon cher*, you are at perfect liberty to refuse," replied De Lorme, with a meaning smile.

They accordingly strolled forth, and gaining the Fentons', unceremoniously entered the parlour, where they found Mary in the most exuberant spirits, which Mr. Seymour could not help remarking. "Why, Mary, you look all smiles and dimples this evening; may I not be a participator in the occurrence?"

"What faculty you have of divining one's expression, Mr. Seymour! It will come to reading thoughts next, I suppose."

"And what then? ought not the face but to reflect the mind, particularly at your age?" he laughed.

"At my age, indeed! and at yours, pray?" retorted Mary indignantly.

"Come, come, my little friend, don't let us play at cross questions and crooked answers, but tell me what had transpired to make you look so particularly well pleased when we entered?"

"Certainly not pleasure at seeing you."

"Mary, Mary, I am astonished," called out Mrs. Fenton in a displeased tone.

"Pray do not chide her," pleaded Mr. Seymour; "I deserved to have my curiosity rebuked. Shake hands, Mary, in token of mutual forgiveness. What! you won't? Ah! I thought you less resentful, but it takes time, I suppose, for all things."

Whilst he turned off with a shrug of his shoulders, De Lorme, who said Mary had been offended without exactly understanding why, did his best to divert her thoughts, with but little success. She had become moody, and replied to his numerous questions quite at random. She had already regretted her petulance, and now wished to conciliate Mr. Seymour, but scarcely knew how to go about it. At length she summoned up courage, and informed him she had three young canaries hatched that morning, the queerest little creatures imaginable, all beaks. If he would come to-morrow, in the daytime, she would show them to him." He acquiesced with a smile at her childish act, in thus seeking a renewal of friendly terms; and duly kept his word, to Mary's infinite gratification, when she volunteered the information he had sought the previous evening in vain.

It was a promise of her father to take her to visit the Lake Vaihiria. "And you will join us, won't you?" she inquired eagerly.

"Why, Mary, I can scarcely think you could stand such a fatiguing journey, as I am led to understand it is," replied Mr. Seymour.

"There you are with your difficulties ! I might have guessed as much ; but I only hope you are not going to put these disagreeable views of yours into Papa's head, and so spoil all my anticipated pleasure," said Mary with seeming anxiety.

"I certainly shall not attempt marring your bright anticipations, Mary, although I very much doubt their realization, more especially if you are to go on horseback."

"Just what we intend doing, and what hosts of others have done before us, Mr. Dubious. I consider that a most appropriate name for you, so expect to hear it in the future." She laughed, clapping her hands at this capital conceit of hers.

"Nor would Miss Incredulous be *mal à propos* either, I think ; but to be serious, Mary, you really had better reconsider this trip ; I am certain it will upset you completely."

"Mr. Seymour, speak for yourself: if you are so very susceptible of fatigue, pray do not join us ; your staying away won't mar my enjoyment, I can vouch for," losing her patience, as she invariably did when arguing with her tormentor.

"And I, the contrary ; but we won't dispute as to what would or would not gratify you: my intention is to accompany you, if for no other reason than to amuse myself at your expense, little lady, so sure am I that you will regret your undertaking when too late."

"What do you mean by too late?"

"Why, ere its completion."

"We shall see, Mr. Dubious."

"So we shall, Miss Incredulous."

The inclemency of the weather, however, necessitated the postponement of their visit for some weeks, till Mary almost began to despair that it would ever take place, whilst Mr. Seymour continually teased her about it. He continued a constant visitor, sometimes accompanied by De Lorme, who invariably played the agreeable to Mary, by singing and playing to her heart's content, leaving Mr. Seymour to while away his evening at cribbage with Mr. Fenton.

"Who wins?" inquired Mary, approaching the table on one of these occasions, and playfully leaning on her father's shoulder.

"You ought, by rights, to pay my losings, Mary," replied Mr. Seymour.

"Why so, pray?"

"For distracting my attention."

"That must be easily effected, then, considering I have not addressed you since the game began."

"And my senses, do they count for nothing in your estimation? Could you suppose me deaf to those melodies you have been singing so sweetly?"

"Nonsense, Mr. Seymour! how can you speak of my singing after Mr. De Lorme's?" replied Mary with a blush.

"Without detracting from De Lorme's fine bary-

tone, I consider you possess an equally charming contralto. Whenever you wish to afford me pleasure, Mary, sing me an English song."

"I did not know you possessed the art of flattery before, Mr. Seymour," she replied, yet decidedly gratified at his compliment, which she knew was sincere, others having praised her voice before now.

"You are determined never to give me credit for a kind thought, my little maid."

"Yes, I would, if you were only somewhat less patronizing in your mode of addressing one."

"I patronize you, my dear child!"

"There, what do you call those expressions, 'my dear child,' and 'my little maid'? I am sure I am not so very young, or little either; and as to child, I am my father's, not yours."

"So this accounts for your frequent petulance, Mary: you would be considered older than you are, as indeed very young people do in general, instead of wisely leaving time to mend the fault. You wish to be treated with all the circumspection due to a young woman, probably?" questioned Mr. Seymour, in a more serious tone than the occasion seemed to warrant.

"Not exactly," murmured Mary, heartily sorry at having exposed her sensitiveness on this point.

"What, then, do you desire? This is the moment, remember, for explicitness, so as to avoid my giving offence in the future, young lady."

"If I am not a woman, neither am I a baby, I suppose?" she said tremulously.

"I tell Mary, if she wishes to be considered a young lady, she must endeavour to act more like one," remarked Mrs. Fenton, amused at her evident discomfort, and rather pleased that she was in a measure getting punished for her absurdity and over-pertness.

"So she does, perhaps, like a very young, inexperienced one; but none of her friends would wish her otherwise than what she is,—natural," rejoined Mr. Seymour kindly.

"I would not, for one," said her father, drawing her down to his lap.

"I wish men in general resembled you more, Papa darling," she replied, as she pressed her face against his, lovingly stroking it the while.

"If they were, would you grant them all the like privileges?" asked Mr. Seymour, with his peculiar smile, which invariably tantalized Mary beyond endurance.

The ready tears now sprang to her eyes, which perceiving, Mr. Seymour arose and bade them good-night, so as to avoid a scene, and change the current of poor Mary's thoughts, if possible, as he plainly saw he was the cause of her distress. She refused him her hand, as he expected, which amused De Lorme greatly, who comprehended actions rather than words on such occasions, understanding but very little English, and speaking less.

When they had finally left, and were out of hearing, Mrs. Fenton took Mary to task for her folly, and desired that there might be no more such sparring between her and Mr. Seymour. "Why, I really don't know what he will think of you," she concluded.

"I am very sorry I have displeased you, Mamma dear, but as to Mr. Seymour, his opinion is a matter of perfect indifference to me; he may be a very agreeable visitor, and liked by Papa and you, but he is equally distasteful to me. I hate the very sight of of him," she cried passionately.

"Why, what has changed the child?" exclaimed her mother in astonishment. "I had no idea you would ever presume to express yourself thus in my presence, or out of it, indeed: but never repeat it again, Mary, or I shall be under the painful necessity of bringing you to reason."

Mary was utterly crestfallen at her mother's tone. What possessed her to make the remark she did, she knew not, for certainly it was far from a correct one. At times she felt annoyed with Mr. Seymour—considered his remarks uncalled-for, his tone wounding to her vanity, which called forth resentment on her part, but, beyond this, she harboured no ill-will: in her inmost heart admired him very much, and would have grieved sincerely at losing his friendship. She certainly had tried hard, very hard, to act as a dignified young lady might be expected to do; but the attempt had proved a complete failure, as the

result had shown. To remain two consecutive minutes serious was an utter impossibility for Mary, whose heart was as light and free as the air she breathed; to give vent to her joyous spirits as natural as it was for her to exist. She humbly besought and received forgiveness from her mother, on the promise of acting differently in the future. And as she sat, ere retiring to her couch, debating what had occurred over in her mind, the resolution was taken to suppress her feelings, and appear indifferent to Mr. Seymour's mode of teasing, which, she inwardly trusted, would effectually break him of the habit. Having come to this wise determination, the world and its annoyances were soon obliterated by that ever ready soother and consoler to the young and innocent—"sweet sleep." Very opposite were the thoughts of De Lorme and Mr. Seymour, as they walked home together that same evening,—the one dwelling with amusement on Mary's childish desire to be treated with more deference than yet he had bestowed on her. She should be gratified, although he felt the charm heretofore experienced in her society would in a great measure be lost to him. The bright pretty girl whom he could play with, or tease, as the mood instigated him, was totally different to the matured young lady, where simple friendliness might be misconstrued into attentions never meant; in his opinion they constituted a sacred feeling as it were, whose purity the slightest familiarity was prone

to mar, therefore, to a certain degree, unapproachable. Such thoughts as these floated through his mind, whilst his companion was cursing his ill-luck at being unable thus far to renew his acquaintance with them, even to gaining a passing glimpse of her fascinating person. She had never ceased to occupy his mind from the first moment he had seen her, and his determination was taken to obtain her, cost what it might. As yet, he had decided on no definite plan to carry out his purpose, hoping that chance might aid him in some way, as he never for a moment doubted his ultimate success. When once Hena knew him, she would soon reciprocate his attachment, and feel flattered at his unbounded admiration for a girl in her sphere.

“What do you intend doing with yourself this beautiful morning, Seymour?” inquired De Lorme as he sipped his coffee *en robe de chambre*.

Well might he term it so. A refreshing shower had fallen during the night, which seemed to have revived drooping nature, after a drought of several days, during which time the scorching rays of the sun had full sway, parching up everything green, and accumulating the dust to an uncomfortable degree. Now, the leaves once more held up their heads, bright and glistening with moisture, whilst the whole atmosphere was impregnated with the perfume of a variety of blossoms, which none but a tropical clime can produce, powerful, yet delicate, as inhaled in the

open air. To complete the enchanting scene the warble of birds was alone needed,—alas! neither to be heard or seen, on any occasion, among the South Pacific Islands.

“What do you intend doing with yourself this beautiful morning, Seymour?” said De Lorme.

“I scarcely know; cool and delightful as it now seems, I am always suspicious of the sun’s increased power after a shower,” replied Mr. Seymour.

“Never mind: if it does prove warmer than agreeable, a bath is always at hand.”

They accordingly sallied forth, and bent their steps towards a small village in the neighbourhood of Papeeti, called Peii, most picturesquely situated near a rural bridge, dividing the sea from a fresh-water stream, which is partially covered over with Indian grass and waterlilies, intermixed with another creeping plant enriched with tiny blue flowers, the leaf of which resembles the ice plant, only of a deeper hue. Near this spot may always be seen a parcel of young girls and boys lounging about on mats, or playing games of an innocent nature. As De Lorme approached, and perceived the group, he exclaimed, “I wonder if we shall find our friends of the other day here, Seymour?”

“I hope not, as I have no desire whatever of renewing the acquaintance myself.”

“No! *à la bonne heure*, it will leave me time to improve it alone then,” said De Lorme.

"I regret to hear you say this, De Lorme; it was much better not followed up, believe me," said Mr. Seymour warmly.

"Why, Seymour, you must consider that pretty water-nymph one of the most dangerously fascinating, bewitching, attractive, and heaven knows what not, creatures existing, to continue preaching discretion, as you do, to such a wilful, deaf vagabond as your humble servant. My dear fellow, believe me, it simply amounts to this—a perfect waste of breath on your part," rejoined De Lorme good-humouredly.

"To speak plainly, De Lorme, I do consider Hena a lovely girl, and you an inveterate *roué* by principle; consequently I deem the meeting of these two elements dangerous," said Mr. Seymour in a serious tone.

"For my share of the compliment, receive my most gracious thanks," replied De Lorme, bowing low, in mock humility; "but what occasion you have had to form such an opinion of me I am at a loss to imagine."

"You should not be, De Lorme. What motive but one can a man have, in following up the acquaintance of a girl like Hena?"

"So, in your estimation, Seymour, it amounts to a crime, having once seen a beautiful girl to desire following up the inspection. Either you must be made of adamant, which I can scarcely believe in so young a man, or you are very wily," returned De Lorme.

"I am neither, De Lorme; on the contrary, perhaps my heart is more tender than that of others, which causes me to shrink from inflicting, or seeing others inflict, pain. I have been taught to 'shun sin, and thereby avoid sorrow.' Although young, as you justly assume, yet I have seen much of the world in all its phases, and it is a satisfaction to me to feel that I can lay my hand on my heart and avow that never, by word or deed, have I poisoned life's path for any one, be it man, woman, or child."

"Unfortunately my principles were not so well inculcated," replied De Lorme with a slight sneer. "Nor can I say I believe in all this balderdash."

They had approached the stream by this, and found what seemed a posse of young people from the distance, was simply a lot of washerwomen, up to their middle in the water, like a parcel of waterfowl; their respective bundles of soiled clothes heaped up on stones, well lathered, and undergoing an unceasing castigation from a stick of hard wood, perfectly regardless of consequences in rents, broken buttons, etc. They would be excellent bleachers if not for the destruction they commit; but, for want of better, have to be endured.

Mr. Seymour and De Lorme stood looking at them, chatting as rapidly as they dealt blows; among whom, whom should they espy, but Taai, bravely at work, more for the fun of the thing than the neces-

sity, as invariably the elderly people labour, leaving the young to enjoy themselves.

De Lorme was delighted, considering the meeting a good omen. At a sign from him she made her way out, and, slipping behind a tree, changed her dress, and joined them with a friendly "Yer honor."

"Do you live here?" eagerly asked De Lorme.

"Yes, there." And she pointed to a large bamboo house, shaded by numerous trees, under which were stretched various people on mats; among whom De Lorme's quick eye failed to single out Hena; but he did not despair.

"I feel awfully parched. Could you procure me a young cocoa-nut, Taai," he inquired.

"Yes, there are plenty on our trees; if you like, I will fetch some; or perhaps you would prefer coming for them," she added; perceiving, in a minute, his look of disappointment at her first proposal. He only too gladly assented.

She led the way, and the strangers soon had fresh mats laid for them—the natives are essentially hospitable. Thus they found themselves surrounded by all the establishment afforded, namely, fruit, and cigarettes made of the native straw, called "tara," instead of paper, when Hena made her appearance in the doorway, looking, if anything, more beautiful than on the previous occasion—probably from the contrast of so many darker objects around her, conspicuous among whom stood out Taai, with her light

figure, good features, and bright black eye. Her dark hue, however, contrasted to disadvantage beside Hena's particularly fair skin. She lingered awhile, not knowing what to do,—her desire to withdraw, so as to avoid De Lorme, counteracted by an earnest wish to know more of his companion, whom she had frequently spoken about to Taai in girlish confidence, his delicacy, and handsome manly appearance being only too well remembered by her. Old Mitua, who was proud of her pretty child, settled her incertitude by calling her to come out and see the gentlemen. She therefore felt compelled to do so, or appear rude. De Lorme quickly sprang to his feet, and was most profuse in his expressions of pleasure at so unexpected a renewal of their acquaintance, vowing that he should henceforth consider himself born under a lucky star. Mr. Seymour sat a silent spectator of the scene passing, having simply bowed to Hena as she approached. She quietly passed on to a place beside him, without having deigned a single word to De Lorme's tirade of nonsense, or, as she considered it, impertinence.

He bit his lip with suppressed passion, for this second inspection of her appearance, had rather increased than lessened his ardour, and as he ran his eyes over her perfect form, he inwardly vowed to make her his, by fair means if possible,—if not, by foul.

There she sat, quietly playing with a weed which

grew at her side, her long drooping lashes sweeping her oval cheek, while her small mouth was just sufficiently parted to display the rows of pearls within. When she at length raised her eyes, they encountered Mr. Seymour's steady gaze. She blushed, and looked down for a minute, then timidly raised them to his face again. He felt somewhat surprised, and continued to examine her, much to De Lorme's annoyance, who could not fail to perceive that she made no attempt to resent an impertinence in some cases, whatever she did in his, which was anything but gratifying to his *amour propre*; so rising at once, in anything but a good humour, he addressed Mr. Seymour with some asperity :

" Well, *mon ami*, if you are not too much absorbed in admiring the beauties of nature, we had better be moving."

" As you please," replied Mr. Seymour, with a peculiar smile of meaning, not lost on De Lorme, causing him to go through a sudden process of fermentation, which ended in the resolution of never again, by any chance, including his wily friend (as he now felt convinced he was) in his visits to the pretty village of Pai.

As Mr. Seymour walked back by the side of his taciturn companion, he could not but wonder what was passing in his mind, although he had no doubt whatever of the subject. He was convinced under-hand play would eventually be resorted to, and deeply regretted to think what the ultimate fate of this really

attractive girl might be ; one of degradation, perhaps, the toy of a passing hour to this young Frenchman, as her mother had been before her. Was there any possibility of saving her from such a destiny ? He feared not—De Lorme was handsome and agreeable, besides being bent on success where fancy led him, and perseverance does so much in such cases. With regard to himself, he could not well interfere, after what he had noticed in Hena's manner towards himself that day.

How little she suspected that her timid regard would deter future visits, rather than encourage them, on Mr. Seymour's part !

“Taai, is he not splendid ?” she eagerly inquired, after they were lost to sight, for she had stood watching their receding forms till they had become a mere speck in the distance.

“Which one, Hena ?”

“You only want to provoke me, Taai,” replied Hena poutingly.

“And why, pray ? To my taste the Frenchman is the beauty. Give me black eyes and hair in a man. I detest a *perpuu*” (fair man).

“Oh ! Taai, darling, don't say so. I want you to admire those I do ; and I find him so very, very handsome, so noble-looking, and good. Will he return again soon, think you ?” And the pretty head nestled itself close to her confidant's shoulder, so as to hide her blushing face.

"Hena, dear, I wish you did not fancy this gentleman so much. It is the first time I have ever heard you praise one so openly, and I feel jealous for poor Matoha."

"Nonsense! I dare say I have seen the last of him;" and she drew herself away from Taai's side, with a gesture of impatience.

"You are not angry with me, I hope, Hena?" asked Taai anxiously.

"No, but I think you might be a little more amiable, and converse on subjects which are agreeable to me. You ought to be well aware, by this, as far as Matoha and I are concerned, what my ideas are, and my decision as well."

"I always live in hopes that you will yet relent in his favour," ventured Taai.

"Never! and now let it drop. I won't speak another word;" nor did she.

It was neither the intention nor desire of Taai to encourage Hena in thinking of Mr. Seymour, for the reason she herself advanced—jealousy for Matoha, whom she knew to be wrapt up in her, loving with an intensity that might hope for some reward. And she was determined to leave no stone unturned to confirm his happiness. Thus she constantly spoke of him, his good qualities, and handsome person, to Hena; a rebuff only silenced her for the moment. And so sped on time, which waited for no man.

It was not the last occasion by many that De Lorme retraced his steps to Pai, which was indeed a beautiful walk, the road lined on either side with a variety of trees of dense foliage. Out of the tropics, where can such verdure be seen? A diminutive leaf excites but little admiration, whereas the dark floating palm, bright green banana, and exquisitely-shaped breadfruit, might gladden the heart of the sternest recluse. No matter how arid the surrounding scenery, descry a clump of these trees, and all the tristeness vanishes, such an appearance of rich fertility do they give to the entire landscape.

But De Lorme's frequent visits advanced his cause but little. Hena met all his protestations with persistent coldness and indifference, which tended but to render him the more enamoured.

It may seem strange that under the circumstances she should make a point of being where he sought her,—sometimes at Pai, sometimes at the bower; she did so, however, under the impression that sooner or later Mr. Seymour would accompany him; but as day after day passed without his doing so, she began to despair and droop; her rounded cheek became thinner, and her beautiful eyes looked larger than was natural, whilst they had an expression painful to see, so plainly did it bespeak a heart ill at ease.

Taai was nonplussed: with all her good resolution in Matoha's favour, she could not endure seeing Hena depressed and unhappy. From the first she had

taken a dislike to Mr. Seymour, considering him cold and reserved to an uncomfortable degree. Nothing could make her alter this opinion, which she had vainly tried to imbue Hena with. Like her own race, De Lorme was fiery, passionate, and jealous; she therefore had more sympathy in common with him: his misery at Hena's conduct, so true, so generous, that she could have wished him success with all her heart, but for Matoha; she also understood that with the quickened perception of a lover he had noticed the preference awarded his friend, and therefore avoided bringing him in consequence.

As she would sit at a little distance off, watching De Lorme trying to ingratiate himself with Hena, his glorious orbs softened down to an almost irresistible effect; her own heart would throb, and a scarcely defined regret steal over her, that she had not been the favoured one instead of the scornful Hena. A native girl never stops to inquire whether her lover's intentions are honourable or otherwise: in resigning herself to his wishes she considers herself as much his wife, whether the mayor registered the fact, or it proved a simple arrangement of mutual consent. It is likewise an indisputable fact that separations are regarded in the same unbiassed manner; a preference formed over-night is sufficient to part those supposed to be "one flesh" the day previous, when an exchange of possessionship occurs with the same *sang-froid* as if it were a change of raiment being effected.

De Lorme certainly brought every act to bear in this case that he had used successfully on previous occasions ; compliments, soft words, presents, and at last reproaches,—for without a single exception Hena rejected his gifts, which exasperated him beyond measure. But one means was left unemployed, and that one he hesitated about, for he had learned to love the girl too well, not to desire some sort of reciprocity. He rarely had a chance of seeing her alone, even with Taai, whom he had come to regard as a mere cipher in his wooing ; for Matoha was constantly present, if not forming one of their party, hanging round, and presenting himself when least wanted. At such moments, Matoha was prone to misinterpret everything Hena said or did, to avoid which, she was obliged to devote herself more to him than she liked, knowing that he but waited the opportunity to speak his own hopes ; for up to the present moment he had not done so, withheld as it were by a nameless fear of breaking the charm of sweet familiarity which had heretofore existed between them. Others had told him of her decision, which, although it wounded him deeply, yet did not prevent him experiencing the greatest amount of happiness in her society. All he at present asked, was the privilege of sitting near her, feasting his eyes on her lovely face, and protecting her from harm, as he had done from her infancy upwards. And as to Hena's own feelings, although she could not endure

the thought of him as a husband, yet did she entertain a sincere sisterly affection for Matoha, whose opinion and wishes she often deferred to, and above all, feared his displeasure. Frequently had she seen his black eye flash with anger on others, though never by any chance on her. Towards Taai he was particularly tyrannical, always inclined to blame her when anything went wrong, more especially when it affected Hena; then he would catch hold of her arm with a vice-like grip, and expression of eye that might have made one less hardy tremble, when an exclamation of fear from Hena's lips would loosen his hold, and call forth a frank avowal of regret for his impetuosity; to all of which Taai seemed perfectly indifferent. Possessed of a quick temper and sharp tongue, yet she never retorted on Matoha: others noticed this, but could not account for it, doubting that Taai acted out the principle of good for evil, as she was ever ready to do Matoha a favour when an occasion presented itself, and never lost an opportunity of praising him to Hena, either, who was many a time on the point of begging him to place his affection on some one more deserving than herself, when the dread of an angry glance from his eyes that had never looked upon her but in kindness, a sharp retort from a tongue, that had never shaped but gentle words for her ears, deterred her, and she could not bear to risk the chance of seeing the protective interest he had ever manifested towards her, merge into cold avoidance.

She complained bitterly to Taai of her situation. "Woe is me, the only love I crave I cannot obtain," she mournfully said.

"One would suppose those you do possess ought to satisfy you, Hena."

"They do not, then ; it is nothing new for Matoha to love me, he has done so always ; and as to Mr. De Lorme, I detest him and his flowery speeches with all my heart : as if he ought not to see that his attentions are distasteful to me, and that I wish him to importune me no more. But he shuts his eyes and ears to all I say and do."

"I wish they had never come to the island," said Taai, with flashing eye.

"So do I, heartily. Oh, Taai ! I was happy enough before I saw Mr. Seymour."

"But Hena, dear, you have only met twice."

"It was twice too often, then, for he is never absent from my mind : when I find he won't come to me, I feel like flying to him."

"Yet you know nothing about him, actually have scarcely heard the sound of his voice."

"Still it is ringing, ever ringing in my ears ; it may seem strange to you, Taai dear, but it is nevertheless true, day and night he occupies my thoughts ; tantalizing enough, for I am only too well aware it is but a distant vision, instead of something tangible I dream of. I am barely fourteen, yet do I feel weary of life. Well can I now comprehend people being

quite satisfied to die, when they are in trouble or pain," she said sadly.

Taai looked at her in astonishment. This absorbing love for a mere stranger, whom she had never conversed with, was totally beyond her comprehension; but Hena's avowal was not to be misbelieved: the truth shone out in her sadly-altered appearance, induced by loss of appetite and mental anxiety.

"Hena, what would Sœur Agatha now think of her pupil,—she who used to laud you up as being an exception to the general rule of natives and half-castes?" said Taai, hoping to rouse her into a happier frame of mind. Her words, however, had a contrary effect: Hena sat with bowed head, her face covered with her clasped hands, through which trickled the scalding tears. Some time had elapsed since last she visited the convent: there was now no consolation to be derived from that quarter: the only subject she could discuss with any degree of interest was certainly not meet for the ears of any of its inmates. And as the saint-like face and form of her favourite teacher rose before her, she recalled her last words of caution, "never to permit man to usurp her Maker's place in her heart." How miserably she had profited by such lessons her present abased position proved, in bestowing her love unsought, as she had unhappily done.

Every tear she continued to shed went to Taai's heart. What could she say to console her after

causing this additional grief by her thoughtless remark? Taai in some things judged Hena by herself; not possessing an overplus of sensitiveness, she ventured on expressing certain ideas of her own, which she would have heard with perfect indifference, had the same been addressed to herself. After a lengthy pause she said—

“Hena, perhaps if you were to confide in Matoha he might be able to aid you in some measure: I know he has your true happiness at heart.”

“Oh, Taai, how can you make such a dreadful suggestion? Why, I would sooner die by inches than let Matoha know what a fool I have been. He would despise me outright, and so he well might; the very thought terrifies me,” she cried, raising up her tear-stained face, and looking at Taai imploringly.

“My darling Hena, it appears as if I could not utter a sensible thing to-day; it would indeed be foolish to speak on such a subject to Matoha, but never fear, you shall see Mr. Seymour, come to pass what may,” and she drew down her troubled head to her shoulder, winding her arms about her, and begged her to cheer up and cease weeping, plenty of happiness was yet in store for her.

“I should catch it in style if Matoha came by and saw you thus; he is awfully savage at times,” she said coaxingly.

“And yet you would have me trust in him, Taai,” said Hena tremulously.

"And even so, you little goose. Do you imagine he would ever raise a hand upon you, no matter what sort of provocation you gave him? Ah, Hena dear, I fear you do not award him half the credit he deserves," said Taai reproachfully.

"Yes, I do, Taai; but if ever he should get angry with me, I know I should die of fear," she replied with a shudder.

Taai held her peace, yet was she forming a plan, with the intention of at once putting it into execution. She slipped out of the bower, and made rapid strides for Papeete, when she took an unfrequented path which led direct to the village of St. Emilie and fronted De Lorme's cottage. After cautiously peeping round, she sped to the back, and found herself face to face with Jaques.

CHAPTER IV.

TAAI VISITS MR. SEYMOUR.

"WHY, Taai, girl, what in conscience' name brings you here?" Jaques exclaimed in surprise, for it was not her practice, he knew, to visit gentlemen, whatever others in her class might do.

"Where is your master?" she inquired anxiously.

"At his office; you will have to return at five o'clock if you have anything to communicate to him," he replied.

"That is delightful," she cried, clapping her hands with gusto, for she felt her purpose was likely to succeed by his timely absence.

"Now, Jaques, we are good friends, and I am going to ask you a favour,—not the first you have done a native girl, I'll be bound."

"Well, what then?" inquired Jaques, scratching his head,—a way with him when pleased, which was usually the case when one of Taai's sex was at hand.

"In the first place, how did you know I meant Mr. De Lorme? You serve two gentlemen, don't you?"

"Yes; but I happen to have an inkling of what is going on in your quarter yonder," he returned, with a knowing wink at Taai.

"You have, have you?"

"Certainly; so it was not very difficult to guess the one you were after," he added, only too proud to display his knowledge of his master's proceedings.

"Then you made a bad one this time. My friend, just bear in mind, if your cottage contains two occupants, so does our quarter yonder," she replied, with her native cunning.

"Well, I never thought of that before, Taai, and considered Mr. Seymour all this time the steadiest man I ever came across."

"And the coldest, perhaps," rejoined Taai, in a slightly bitter tone, passed unnoticed by Jaques, who could not get over the idea of being deceived in his favourite master.

"So you are surprised that I seek Mr. Seymour, Jaques?" inquired Taai.

"Yes, I am, and that is flat," snapped Jaques, now entirely out of humour at having been kept in the dark so long; his one great delight being the knowledge of other people's business matters, having so little of his own to think about.

"You might be a little more polite," retorted Taai.

"What do you come bothering me for, then? Don't you see that I have my work to attend to? Come, be off with you," he returned, in a surly tone.

But Taai stood her ground. "I will not budge till I have said one little word to Mr. Seymour; and the favour I ask at your hands, my man, is that you show me his room, and, above all, do not mention a word about our interview to Mr. De Lorme,—unless, indeed, you would relish a quarrel between them," said Taai hastily.

Jaques gave a long low whistle at this other piece of information; he concluded at once to keep friends with Taai.

"So the wind blows in that direction, does it? and I never suspected that either. Taai, the fact is, I am getting rusty in this out-of-the-way corner; I must brush up a bit."

Taai chuckled inwardly at his mystification. She knew him thoroughly, and was aware he would lend himself to anything for the sake of learning a secret.

"I may depend on your discretion then, Jaques?"

"That you may. There, go in. The door is made for people to pass through, I suppose; and it is none of my business, who talks to the gentlemen. Only don't say I showed you the way. His room is to the right, mind, and knock for admittance."

"Thank you, Jaques ; I shall not forget this piece of business."

"Never mind that ; but do not stay long, Taai, lest the other should return earlier than usual, which I begin to think the most likely thing in the world," he cried, looking anxiously towards the clock.

But Taai had not stopped to hear what he thought. She was as anxious as he could be to have the interview over, and lost no time in finding the indicated apartment.

Mr. Seymour was lying on a couch, reading. When the knock came at his door, he at once said "Come in," thinking it might be Jacques with his boots or water. The door opened and shut again ; but distinguishing no steps, he looked up and stared with speechless astonishment at Taai. He evidently did not recognize her, for he said, "My good girl, you have made some mistake : I cannot be the person you seek." These few words did not tend to reassure her ; she had been bold enough in getting thus far ; now, however, her courage forsook her entirely, and with it her memory, for every word of the many things she had intended saying was forgotten ; and there she stood, looking awkwardly at him, not knowing whether it were best to advance or retreat, as the only means of extricating herself from the terrible dilemma she had so heedlessly got into.

"I thought your face familiar to me, and I now remember who you are," he at length said, rising

with a good-humoured smile, and offering her a seat.

She heaved a deep sigh of relief, and was once more the brave Taai; but she declined his civility, preferring to stand.

"I suppose you came to see Mr. De Lorme?" he questioned.

"No, it was you I sought, Mr. Seymour. Hena knows nothing of it, believe me; but she is very miserable, and it seemed to me you could aid her better than any other. I dare not stay longer, in case of being caught by Mr. De Lorme; but if you would follow me back, and speak to the poor girl, and judge for yourself how altered she is, your advice might do her good. You will not regret coming, I know, Sir," said Taai, for he at first hesitated, but at her urgency at last consented. Delight was depicted on her countenance; the mission was succeeding beyond even her most sanguine expectations, as she first passed from the cottage, followed a moment after by Mr. Seymour, and detected Jaques hiding behind a tree on the look-out.

"Well done!" he muttered; "here have I been lauding him up as the most moral man in existence, and here, in the twinkling of an eye, all his good qualities vanish, and he stands forth no better than the rest of us. Or can it be just possible that this young jade is trying to beguile him? These black-eyed hussies are capable of anything, when they could

cause a blunted fellow like Clavion to hang himself through sheer jealousy. But if she thinks to blind me, she is mistaken, that is all ; I will find the matter out yet ;” and once more he had recourse to scratching his head, to sharpen his intellect.

Mr. Seymour desired to question Taai about Hena, which she suspected, and managed to avoid affording any opportunity, *en route* at least. To keep him in view was all she now cared about, as she lightly tripped on in the direction of the bower. When they approached it, Mr. Seymour could distinctly perceive Hena unseen. She was sitting on a mat, with drooping head and clasped hands, totally unconscious of his near vicinity ; and he could not but start as he noted her altered appearance. Taai had not deceived him, after all ; the poor child was being tormented to death, he could plainly see. Their footsteps at length caused her to look up, when she sprang to her feet, looking askance at the two before her. Taai had told him the truth here, also ; there could be no mistaking Hena’s inquiring eyes ; she did not expect him was evident. He entered, and kindly taking her slender hand, said—

“You are surprised to see me here, Hena ; am I unwelcome?”

“Oh no ; it is so very long since I last saw you that I felt for a moment bewildered,” she replied in a tremulous voice, whilst a vivid blush for a second suffused her cheek.

"Well you might be so, for I scarcely know myself why I am here; but perhaps Taai will be kind enough to explain it, as she it is who induced my visit," he replied in a grave tone. Once more doubts were rising in his mind. Why should Hena's hand tremble in his, and what called forth that momentary blush? he questioned.

"I thought as much, but I am happy to see you on any terms, Mr. Seymour," she said sadly, whilst she glanced timidly at his face to mark the effect of her words.

He was examining her earnestly, and evidently had not heard her remark, as his first question proved.

"Have you been ill, my child?"

"No, not exactly ill," she said mournfully.

"What then? Come, tell me what troubles you, Hena?"

She made no reply, but the large tears began to course each other down her wan cheek.

"Hena is miserably unhappy, as you see; and it is all your fault," volunteered Taai.

"Mine? that is an idea which I would like exemplified," replied Mr. Seymour, much amused.

"Yes, indeed, I mean what I say; there you left your friend to come here day after day, worrying Hena to death; she can't endure him, but he won't believe this. Had you only accompanied him occasionally, it might have prevented her being troubled so often," persisted Taai.

"I doubt it. De Lorme takes advice from no one, particularly when it clashes with his pleasures. Poor child ! I wish I could influence him to better things, kinder deeds, than he appears to be bent on at present ;" and he once again took in his, Hena's hand, which he immediately released, however.

"Never let him come without you again," suggested 'Iaai cunningly.

"My good girl, if you will let Hena speak for herself, you will greatly oblige me," returned Mr. Seymour coldly ; then, turning to Hena, he continued, "You will answer me the following questions, Hena, if you please : Do you really dislike Mr. De Lorme's visits and attentions ?"

"Oh yes, dreadfully ;" and she shudderingly covered her face with her hands, to try and disguise the tears which would ooze through her slender fingers, speaking her woe more plainly than words could possibly do, and which affected her questioner deeply ; he thoroughly believed in her.

"You must not think me presuming or inquisitive, Hena, but I am anxious to know if my surmises are incorrect. Matoha, is he not much much attached to you ? Am I to take silence for assent ? If so, your way is clear enough to be rid of De Lorme's annoyance : marry him at once, and give yourself a legitimate protector."

Hena sat stunned at such a piece of advice coming from him above all people living, and it must be con-

fessed even Taai felt rather queer. Was her intrigue to gratify Hena to end by crushing her entirely?

"Speak, Hena; shall I see this Matoha on the subject?" he urged. With a violent effort she roused herself.

"Mr. Seymour, you are in error. I could not deny Matoha's predilection for me, but it is not reciprocal," she murmured, in a tearful voice.

"That surprises me, Hena, for only once have I seen you together, and then it did not seem to me you objected to his loving glances, which he certainly was not chary with."

She blushed at this remark, but in a husky voice explained their exact positions, as well as her feelings. "I know him to be kind and good, and would do almost anything rather than displease him; but as to any nearer tie, that is utterly impossible. And ah! Mr. Seymour, let me beg you never to allude to this subject again, for it, too, renders me most wretched," she said, sobbing bitterly now.

"Why should it, Hena, when a man every way worthy of you, as prepossessing in appearance as he is kind and gentle in disposition, offers you his hand and heart? What is there in that to render you unhappy? Are you ambitious?"

"No, Mr. Seymour; but I will never marry any one I cannot love, and above all a native," replied Hena with dignity.

"I approve of the first sentiment, if I cannot ex-

actly of the last, Hena ; you are partially a native yourself, remember, and people in glass houses should never throw stones." The words were regretted as soon as uttered, when he noticed the expression of anguish which passed over her face, and saw how he had wounded the feelings of the already sufficiently tried girl ; he therefore hurried to say—

"Pardon me, Hena, and attribute my thoughtless remark to an over-earnest desire on my part to see you lodged in a safe harbour. Your repugnance to a union with a native is not to be wondered at, after all ; so let us change the topic, as I see it pains you."

The sweetest music could not have sounded more pleasantly to her ears than the present modulated tone of his voice, as he endeavoured to do away with the impression of his previous unworthy speech ; she hung upon it, in total forgetfulness of everything but his present gentleness.

They conversed about many things which surprised Mr. Seymour, who had no idea that natives or half-castes could express themselves so reasonably as Hena did. He drew from her all he desired to know, and then rose hurriedly, astonished to find by his watch how rapidly the afternoon had flown by. When he had gone, Taai burst out into a wild peal of laughter.

"Oh, Taai ! how did you manage to do such a thing ?" cried Hena.

"By going boldly to work. Nothing like impu-

dence in these cases ; that will succeed when nothing else may," she replied, dancing about in perfect glee. She then poured into Hena's ears what had passed. "To be candid, I felt awfully afraid when once in his presence ; a shiver ran right through me, and I forgot what I had intended saying all in a minute. Then I stood before him as dumb and guilty-looking as any thief ; but never mind, my courage returned, and I came off victor after all. Would he not be disgusted did he know the motive which led me to entice him here?"

"What might it be, Taai?" asked Hena innocently.

"Well, did one ever hear such a remark as that? 'What might it be, Taai?'" and the girl mimicked her tone exactly. "So this is the sort of return I may expect for mixing myself up in your love affairs. Hena,—all the trouble I have had, and risk, to let you see this great Mogul, without a single word or look from you to recompense me!" she cried, in an injured voice.

"Oh, 'Taai! Taai! don't get vexed with me. I did divine that I owed everything to you; but when you spoke, I was thinking about him, and answered you as I did, without knowing exactly what I said.'" And she wound her arm about her waist, and laid her head caressingly on the shoulder of this, her best friend, and only confidant.

Hena felt particularly grateful to Taai for her kind

intentions. She knew, without her aid she would never have seen Mr. Seymour that day; and although most parts of their interview had been of a painful nature, still his very presence had been a pleasure to her, which no words could express; yet, mixed with it all, was genuine regret at the deception practised on him, which she could never approve of. It was this impression which prevented her from becoming so enthusiastic in Taai's praise as was expected of her: she feared to express her true sentiments to Taai, who might resent them, being incapable of appreciating such sensibilities.

"What if he should find out the truth, and suspect me in the connivance?" she ventured to say, however.

"There is no danger of that, Hena; but, once for all, let me implore you not to waste your happiness and affections on him. Depend upon it, he despises the natives. If you could have seen his look of annoyance when first I entered his room,—it amounted almost to repugnance; then, how heartlessly he expressed himself here to your very face."

"He excused himself, Taai."

"How could he help doing that when he looked at you? Oh, Hena, I feel sure, until this day, he had forgotten your very existence," cried Taai indignantly.

"I dare say, Taai," said Hena humbly; yet she could not refuse the desire to know more; inquired

how the room looked? what he was doing? and a hundred other questions about him, which disgusted Taai the more.

"I don't know. I saw nothing but his cross face, felt nothing but my own trembling limbs. Nothing would possess me to return there again."

"You find his face cross, Taai! why, it seems to me very gentle and kind," said Hena, blushing up.

"Of course, he is a piece of perfection in your eyes, but then everybody allows love to be blind; however, as I am not in that detestable state, I may pronounce myself an impartial judge. And in my humble opinion, Mr. Seymour, with all his gentle ways, has a spice of the devil about him. A more repelling countenance I never encountered, when it suits him to assume one. I look upon him as your evil genius, Hena; he must have bewitched you in some way or other. You need never expect perfect happiness through him, I can tell you. I would not give Matoha or M. De Lorme for a hundred such as he." Having delivered herself thus, uninterruptedly, she flung her full length on a mat, and went sound to sleep, leaving Hena to ruminate on her words at leisure.

Mr. Seymour's absence created some surprise in De Lorme, who knew him to be averse to walking out during the heat of the sun. He expressed the same on his return, which proved late, in a tone of manifest curiosity, to which Mr. Seymour replied—

"My dear fellow, am I in the habit of questioning you on such subjects?"

"Well, you might do so; but what sort of satisfaction you would receive is another thing," laughed De Lorme. "But you ought to bear in mind, we are 'saint' and 'sinner' in this establishment. Any construction might be placed on my absence; in yours, simply curiosity."

"Which will have to go ungratified, I fear, on this occasion; after hearing myself so eulogized, I could never dream of confessing my foibles," laughed Mr. Seymour.

"You go in for fair beauties; the pretty Mary Fenton, for instance,—eh, Seymour?"

"You are a very shrewd guesser, De Lorme. "May I ask who is your présent *penchant*?"

"My past, present, and future are one and the same, Do you suppose there exist two Henas in this world?"

"Perhaps not; but is she not going to marry that young chief?"

"How absurdly you talk, Seymour! I never knew such an obstinate fellow about certain things. When you get a notion into your pate, you stick to it through thick and thin. You ought to have been convinced, long since, of the impossibility of such an event. I was, from the beginning," said De Lorme, with some impatience.

"Permit me, then, to alter my mode of questioning. Do you intend marrying her yourself?"

"Certainly—native fashion. Cupid's marriage is my fancy; it is so convenient—a thousand times more attractive than going through a tedious ceremony."

"Is such Hena's opinion? She seemed to me such a modest-looking girl."

"Rather too much so to suit my fancy. I hate prudishness in any form; but I am quite convinced she will eventually succumb to my wishes. Nothing like perseverance and patience: it wins over almost anything; but she is a spiteful angel, despite her sweet face. Would you believe it, Seymour, she has never forgiven me that look I cast on her in the water. I see it in a hundred ways, by those irresistible pouts of hers, which tempt one to catch her up and chase them away; but, as yet, I have actually never touched her hand. I dare not; somehow, she has such a way of keeping a fellow aloof. All in good time, I suppose, but it begins to tell on me. This sort of incertitude never agreed with me, and the sooner it is ended the better for all parties,—and that must be, in possessing her," said De Lorme determinedly.

De Lorme was delighted to seize the very first opportunity to give vent to his overflowing feelings. Up to the present moment he had been very cautious as to what he said, on this delicate subject, to Mr. Seymour; now, however, that he fancied he likewise had an intrigue, he was more confiding, mentioning Mary Fenton's name being a mere *ruse* of

his, well knowing that Mr. Seymour looked upon her in the light of a mere child ; nor did he care particularly about being informed of the name of his friend's *chère amie*, so long as there was one, which he now had no doubt of. At any other time he might have indulged in witticisms at Mr. Seymour's expense, who was much amused at De Lorme's error regarding himself, which, to suit certain purposes of his own, he decided on not explaining away, remaining, to all appearance, an interested listener to the other's voluble remarks in the grandiloquent line, whilst, in reality, his thoughts were far away, pondering on the different natures of men, and their glaring contradictions ; a fair sample of which stood before him, bragging of possessing a vast amount of patience and perseverance, when in fact he was wanting in both. He had frequently boasted of his successes with the fair sex, yet here was an instance to the contrary, where a conquest might have been supposed easy ; nor were obstacles likely to cool the ardour of such a man, whom Mr. Seymour well knew to be most unprincipled. Still was De Lorme not wanting in refinement, which Mr. Seymour could not conciliate, with his intention of persecuting a girl into quiescence. Did she in any way reciprocate his affections, he could then almost have pardoned him being fascinated, and desirous of winning such a truly interesting girl, as he could not but allow Hena to be ; but as it was a case of forcing inclinations, he could

not approve. To chase away disagreeable impressions, he walked to the Fentons', where he found a visitor, before unknown to him.

Mrs. Wells was a widow of independent means, though dubious parentage, possessing an only child, a rather pretty girl of about Mary's age, with whom she was a great friend; she was supposed to resemble her father, certainly not in the least degree her mother, who was a remarkably tall, masculine person, with a far from agreeable expression: it was as hard as the trade she had carried on for many years, thereby accumulating a handsome fortune which she scarcely knew what to do with, so unaccustomed had she been in early years to luxuries of any description. A great talker, if not a good one, Mrs. Wells was ever prone to mix herself up in other people's private affairs, and place perfect faith on the worst side of every question. Not one of the least failings, was her mode of bringing up her daughter, Fanny, a fair delicate girl, below the middle height as yet, whatever change in size time might effect. She had a timid, shrinking manner when in her mother's presence, which plainly betokened a system of harsh treatment, with but little freedom in either speech or action. The only thing about her which manifested that some sort of interest might be felt in the girl by her mother, was her dress, which proved always of the richest materials. The Fentons put up with the mother for the sake of the daughter, whom they pitied. Report, that could

never be silenced, vaguely asserted that Mr. Wells had been worried into a premature grave by his loving wife, who now treated his child with unnecessary severity; be that as it might, Fanny looked vastly cowed down for so young a girl, and only child. Mary was the confidant, into whose ears she poured all her grievances, with many a sigh and bitter tear. Although not a particularly bright girl, she was yet only too alive to her mother's odd ways,—above all, her propensity of ferreting out people's ages, and making ill-natured remarks.

She was thus occupied when Mr. Seymour entered the room. After a slight pause, occasioned by an introduction, she returned to her favourite theme, "People."

"You may believe me, Mary, when I assert that Hena is going wrong; I have the very best authority for what I advance. Never be sure of these meek-faced girls: still waters run deep, you know, my dear," continued Mrs. Wells.

"I don't believe a word of it," cried Mary indignantly.

"You will by-and-by, Mary; I am well aware that she was a favourite of yours at the convent; but Hena there, under the control of those blessed Sisters," (Mrs. Wells was a devout Catholic,) "is a very different person to the Hena left to roam at large. These half-castes are not one jot different in their morals to the natives—six of one and half-a-dozen of the other;

she has just sufficient good looks to have half-a-dozen lovers dancing attendance on her, and if I were your mother, I would forbid your ever again noticing her," remarked Mrs. Wells, bobbing her wicked head at Mary.

"Mrs. Wells, it is a very great shame of you, to talk like this against an innocent, inoffensive girl, who is not here to defend herself against slander," said Mary with warmth.

"Mary, what do you mean by accusing me of such a thing? Do you call it slander to repeat the evidence of one's own eyes? The drop of white blood she has in her veins may affect her skin, but never her soul."

"Her soul is a vast degree more pure than many who call themselves ladies; and nothing but what I saw myself would make me credit Hena less good than she is beautiful. Among all the classes at the convent not one could be found to equal her in behaviour: she was a general favourite, even with the sisters, and I have often heard Sœur Agatha say, she was too angelic to live, and if you now say such unkind things about her it will be dreadful. Oh, Mr. Seymour, if you only knew the girl who is being so belied," said Mary, with tears in her beautiful eyes. "You, who are something of a physiognomist, would substantiate my opinion, I know, were you only to see her."

"I have met the young person, Miss Mary (for

some time back he had called her Miss), whom you speak of."

"You have! where?" she asked in surprise, whilst Mrs. Wells glanced triumphantly at Mrs. Fenton.

Mr. Seymour noticed her action, and quietly replied—

"I met her on the road to Tataaia one day, and being struck by her remarkable loveliness and grace, inquired her name: this is about all the information I can offer you, Madam," he said, addressing Mrs. Wells pointedly.

"You were alone, Sir, when you met her?" she inquired, returning his look unshrinkingly.

"No, Madam, nor was she; another girl was with her, not nearly so fair or pretty," he replied.

Another glance was exchanged between her and Mrs. Fenton, as she rose to take leave.

"Why did you not bring Fanny, Mrs. Wells?" asked Mary, by way of saying something.

"She has a headache—cried herself into one, which is generally the case when I am compelled to reprimand her. Her poor dear father used to suffer the same: everything affected his head, which kept me in a continual state of anxiety," replied the hypocrite as she made her exit, none too soon for the patience of some present.

"So you have actually seen Hena, and admire her?" said Mary, returning to the subject.

"I do, Mary; and unless her face deceives, she is

as good as she looks : a modest, retiring girl is portrayed in her every feature."

"There, Mamma, surely you will believe Mr. Seymour before you do that abominably wicked woman."

"Hush, hush, Mary ; I do not like to hear you express yourself so determinedly on any subject. The fact is, Mr. Seymour, I feel interested in this young girl, on Mary's account particularly, who has always liked and encouraged her to come here occasionally to spend the day. I should therefore like to learn more about her way of living," she continued, addressing him earnestly, thinking he might enlighten her.

"I can quite appreciate your motives, Mrs. Fenton, and, as far as I can glean of her conduct, you may allow Miss Mary to continue her acquaintance, no matter what Mrs. What's-her-name may say to the contrary," returned Mr. Seymour in answer to her silent appeal.

Just then Mr. Fenton put his head in at the open window.

"Has that woman gone? Excuse me, Seymour, but I keep out of the way when Mrs. Wells makes her appearance. Her sharp voice and tongue render me nervous, I believe, for I never can feel comfortable in her company ; although my wife insists that men are greater scandal-mongers than women. We must be a confounded bad lot, then, Seymour,

taking Mrs. Wells as an example of the womenkind, eh?"

Mary's face brightened up at her father's words; he could not condemn Mrs. Wells more thoroughly than she did in her heart, which at times induced her to launch forth in stronger terms than was seemly in a young person. She was a clever girl, and conscious that at such moments her mother ought to feel dissatisfied, particularly before strangers; the knowledge of this influenced her to approach her side now, and implore, in a low tone, for forgiveness, which was at once granted, with the request, however, that she would be more guarded in her language for the future.

"I am so thoughtless, Mamma dear, yet it invariably renders me miserable to know I have displeased you in anything," she said, in a tearful voice.

These scenes had frequently happened before Mr. Seymour. Mary, with all her desire to be thought a dignified young lady, constantly acted the child, all unconscious as she was of the fact: so perfectly natural was this line of conduct to her,—offending, pouting, and asking forgiveness almost in the same breath, with the simplicity and native innocence of extreme youth.

According to her request, Mr. Seymour treated her with the utmost deference, which did not seem to gratify so much as might have been expected; every time he called her "Miss Mary" she felt like

crying, as she also missed his little familiarities sadly, and would have given worlds for the renewal of the old war of words between them; but Mr. Seymour was not to be beguiled; her attempts to make him forget her past conduct were fruitless, as his altered manner was of her seeking, which fact only made Mary feel the more uncomfortable, so little do young people know what they really do want.

She was sent on some message, when Mr. Seymour availed himself of her absence to remark to Mrs. Fenton how surprised he was that a young girl should be allowed to listen to certain conversations, and take her part in them, as Mary did; that in England it would be unheard-of.

"Your idea is quite a correct one, Mr. Seymour, but, unfortunately, it cannot be considered here: any one speaking the native language cannot but become enlightened on many subjects; euphonious as it sounds, everything is expressed in the most open manner. I tried to avoid Mary's learning it, but it was useless; she picked it up without an effort," replied Mrs. Fenton.

"Then I would prevent her speaking it," he said decisively.

"That is easier said than done, believe me, Mr. Seymour," laughed Mrs. Fenton.

"Not at all. I would take the means of making her forget every word she knew, had I any control over her."

Mr. Fenton glanced up to him, and instinctively felt that that man had a determined will of his own if any one had.

"Then you would have to make her keep her eyes shut at the same time, for you see as much nearly as you hear in these islands," she replied seriously.

"Too true, Mrs. Fenton. Why do you not take her to Europe? She is just at an age to require other teachers than can be possibly met with here."

"Her father talks of doing so some day; but it is difficult to meet with any one capable of taking charge of his business."

"Who knows? we may all go together yet," said Mr. Seymour.

De Lorme was duly made acquainted with the conversation that had occurred at the Fentons' on Mr. Seymour's return home.

"That widow woman was certainly alluding to you, De Lorme; and, I fear, if you are not careful you will ruin the girl's good name."

"What the d—l do I care for the tongues of those jabbering women? Do you suppose such remarks are going to intimidate me?" he cried furiously.

"I also hear that Hena is looking very unwell, and far from happy," continued Mr. Seymour coolly.

"Nonsense! she is well enough; and as to her happiness, that can be an after event. She is in the

position of a bird who has been entrapped, and feels its wings about being clipped. I believe my importunities have wellnigh wearied out her resistance, for she evidently begins to fear herself now. Every time I approach her she has a startled look, as if fearing the next step. My love will requite her for all I have made her suffer."

"And can you possibly allow that you have done all this, De Lorme?"

"And why not, pray? Was anything of a tender nature ever caught without a slight bruising, no matter how prized and treasured after?"

"I do not hesitate to say, De Lorme, that I doubt your ever succeeding in entrapping this same bird, unless, indeed, she is other than she seems."

"Come with me to-morrow, Seymour; you can then judge of her looks. I hope she is not failing in health; and yet her figure looks sligher than it did, so does her hand. The idea makes me feel devilish queer, for her mother, you know, died of consumption through the villainy of some scoundrel."

"And what are you about doing?"

"I? What do you mean, Seymour?" he asked, with a startled look.

"Are you not following this same scoundrel's footsteps,—trying to seduce a poor girl, to abandon her hereafter?"

"Never!" he exclaimed, with heightened colour. "Never would I dream of leaving her. Oh, Sey-

mour, you cannot comprehend the intense, consuming love I bear for Hena, to suppose such a thing possible. My future life shall be devoted to her wholly and solely."

"So have said many before you, but to what purpose, De Lorme? The idea lasts as long as the fleeting passion; no more, no less. Are you not bound to another?"

"Don't mention her; she never had my love. It was a contract made by my family alone. Never before have I adored any like Hena. You are wrong to call it a fleeting passion, a mere fancy, Seymour; it is my life!" he cried enthusiastically.

"If you love her to the extent you say, you ought to display some consideration and leave her in peace."

"Alas! Seymour, it is too late; you ask more than I have power to grant;" and the really stricken young man covered his face and groaned in agony. He only spoke the truth when he said his life was bound up in Hena; she constituted his thoughts by day and his dreams by night; no matter what his occupation, she was ever present in his mind.

At first, her coldness and reserved manner puzzled him; he could not conceive his delicate attentions disagreeable; attributed it to timidity, shyness, anything rather than the right cause; for he could not believe any one with a drop of native blood virtuous, therefore never doubted his ultimate success. He

perceived her sufferings at his renewed attacks, which he fancied arose from fear rather than disinclination, so imbued was he with his self-consequence and irresistible attractions for the fair sex.

According to promise, the next day they proceeded together to Fatawa, when, lo! the bower was silent, the birds had flown. De Lorme began to feel uneasy, when they again made their appearance. The fact was, Hena, having seen Mr. Seymour the day previously, did not expect him to return so soon again, therefore had no desire to meet De Lorme; but Taai happening to perceive them coming, scampered to Peii, and brought Hena with her. Each was provided with work, one plaiting straw for a hat, the other weaving some into a wreath. Never before had Hena been so gracious; she smiled, and seemed well pleased with her visitors; nor could Mr. Seymour disguise from himself the fact, that she was improved in appearance even during the last twenty-four hours.

Suddenly Matoha stood before them, with a basket of beautiful flowers. He was looking ill and hollow-cheeked, and glanced scowlingly at the gentlemen and at Taai, as if he considered it was her doing, bringing them there to lead astray his darling. She knew such to be his fixed opinion, which no avowal of his could alter. Lately, his treatment had been more harsh and unjust than usual, but invariably out of Hena's hearing, which Taai submitted to without

a murmur of complaint, beyond assuring him he misjudged her.

He had noticed Hena's suffering appearance with sincere pain; her dreamy attitudes and absent manner, to say nothing of the sad expression in her beautiful eyes, proved to him that she also was in love, otherwise what could cause the alteration in her? and, as he heard from a distance, her laugh, and saw how animated she now looked, he decided that De Lorme had won her heart. This accounted for his frequent visits to the bower, which Taai, the young wretch, pretended were excessively disagreeable to Hena, so as to blind him. These thoughts flitted through his mind as he turned and gazed upon her, oh! so sadly and tenderly, for was she not still his best beloved? He little knew that Hena was in no better plight than himself; that her sad face was not caused by De Lorme's absence, but by the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. He was not aware how willingly she would have dispensed with De Lorme's visits, and perseveringly avoid meeting him,—had not the one absorbing hope led her on, day by day?—did she expect to see him accompanied by another?—until, sunk into despair, she commenced to droop and pine for what might not be.

"Are those for me, Matoha?" she said, pointing to the basket and smiling in his face.

"Yes, if you care for them, Hena," he replied, moodily handing her the flowery offering.

"Why should you doubt my doing so, Matoha? You are well aware of my love for such treasures," she said, taking up a few and inhaling the perfume with delight.

"Hena, I begin to doubt everything and everybody, since you have so changed in conduct; a short time since you were an exception to every other girl on the island, is it so still?"

A vivid blush proved that she understood to what he referred, whilst anger at the unjust accusation caused her to answer him as she had never expected to do.

"Matoha, I never thought you capable of wounding my feelings intentionally before; with such an impression of me I cannot understand why you should trouble yourself to bring me these; but here, take them back, I want nothing more from you," and she passionately threw the flowers at his feet. Matoha stood looking pityingly down on her. Was not her very anger proof of the correctness of his surmises? All at once jealous fury took possession of him. What! was the kindness and love of years to be thus treated,—be despised for a mere stranger? His powerful frame trembled with suppressed passion.

"Cruel, cold-hearted girl! but what might I expect from your sex, after the fate of Ariiauai? You shall be no more troubled by my presence, however," he gasped forth, as he rushed from the bower, leaving the now sobbing Hena a prey to the most sincere

regret and grief. She had too few friends to afford to lose such a one as Matoha.

Neither Mr. Seymour or De Lorme were much surprised at this scene; the former looked commiseratingly down on Hena, so absorbed in anguish as to be heedless of the presence of witnesses. There she lay, crouched on her mat, weeping bitterly. De Lorme, on the contrary, much as he sympathized with her sorrow, hoped it would soon blow over, and was right pleased at the prospect of being rid of such a fiery, importunate individual as Matoha. He had learned sufficient of the native language to enable him to understand a portion of what had been said; thus, the allusion to Ariiauai excited his curiosity. Could Hena have had a lover before? he was determined to elicit an explanation.

"Taai, what has all this hubbub meant, and by what right does Matoha come here to insult Hena? I insist upon knowing, ere I hunt him up and chastise him for every tear he has made her shed," said De Lorme.

"You had better leave Matoha alone; and if you dislike to see Hena weep, why, cease your visits. Matoha only reproaches me about them," replied Taai bravely.

De Lorme whistled. "*Parbleu!* I might have divined this; the fool is jealous, and wishes to make others as miserable as himself," he muttered below his breath.

"Hena, do you love that man?" he asked seriously. She shook her head.

"Then he has no earthly right to interfere; and Taai, please keep your advice till it is asked for," he said brutally.

"It only formed part of the answer to the question you put me; and as to right, Matoha has every reason to speak as he did to Hena, and to check her when he sees her going wrong. You may believe me, if she does not really love him as he would like, yet she thinks a thousand times more of him than she does of you, with all your fiery looks," she cried angrily; Hena's shake of the head in reply to De Lorme's question having vexed her beyond endurance.

"For pity's sake, hold your peace, girl, and tell me who this Ariiauai is that he alluded to?" exclaimed De Lorme impatiently.

One of Taai's weaknesses was relating stories. Scarcely a day passed that she did not find something to tell to a parcel of ever-ready hearers, who sat gaping about her, when the fall of a pin might be heard, such silence reigned at these recitals; when she would colour the original till it was neither recognisable nor probable, yet believed from beginning to end by these simple people, who delight in such things.

De Lorme's question produced a momentary outburst; here was a chance for her to surpass herself, not as a tell-tale, but as a tale-teller; in other words, a relater of anecdotes or histories.

"Prince Ariiauai was the eldest son of Queen Pomare. The prince died some years ago of a broken heart, although others pronounced it to be consumption; he was very young to die, however, but if you like, I will relate all that is known about him."

Her offer was readily accepted, so she settled herself into a comfortable position, and clearing her voice, began her narrative.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF PRINCE ARIIAUAI.

PRINCE Ariiauai was the eldest and decidedly the handsomest and most liked of all Queen Pomare's children. Tall and lithe, with finely formed features, black curly hair, and large splendid eyes, created him the beau, *par excellence*, of all the young maidens round, who vied with each other to gain his favour; but his predilection was for a young beautiful girl called Tiaii (flower), who, as well as being the prettiest, was the liveliest and most independent of her sex. A retort was ever ready for any one, but more particularly her own lover, whom she enjoyed teasing beyond measure, quarrelling, seemingly, for the mere pleasure of making it up again. Her very *non-chalance* and indifference, however, had the sole effect of fascinating him, much to the wonder of those who

envied her her power, themselves incapable of retaining the continued devotion of any lover. His liberality was another source of annoyance; not only was Tiaii herself a daily recipient of his lavish favours, but even her family was surrounded by every comfort through Ariiauai's means (they were not well off, and were only too glad to accept necessities of life at the cost of their daughter's dishonour, a custom only too common among native parents); food, clothing, and money they received *ad libitum*. Her companions were but pretended friends, who in their hearts detested her superior attractions, and tried all in their power to effect her downfall by insinuations against her character, which were intended to reach the ear of the devoted Ariiauai. At first he resented these innuendoes as purely malicious, but by dint of continually throwing out dark hints, their effect upon him was becoming apparent. He became suspicious, and at length he was questioned by Tiaii as to the cause of his reserved manner. She finally coaxed the truth from him, which put her into a perfect rage against him and her accusers. "What! you have nothing better to do than heed these *nies* (dogs)?" she cried savagely. (When the natives quarrel they give vent to their spleen in abuse alone; such shrieking, screaming, and variety of vile epithets as the occasion of a misunderstanding calls forth is truly ridiculous, and Tiaii was no exception to this rule.) The scene ended, for the first time since they had

known each other, in a serious quarrel; she vowing "that she would never live another day with such a suspicious, weak-minded fool."

"But, Tiaii, only take into consideration my unbounded love for you, and how I must suffer to hear you even spoken against. Oh, my flower! if you would but be a little less independent in your manner of going about things, it might afford these wicked people less chance of jumping at conclusions," implored Ariiauai.

"I can't act otherwise than what is natural to me, to please either you or them; if I could, you might like me less and they be satisfied," she replied angrily.

The plausibility of this speech struck him at once. It was her very odd ways he loved so much; had she been more like the generality, her power over him would certainly have been less. No, he desired no change in her, and hurriedly told her so; but she was not to be so easily appeased.

"Tiaii, my own star! Tiaii, never in my heart did I credit a word against you," he urged anxiously.

"Yes, you have; and, with all your pretence, you are glad to be rid of me. You have taken a fancy to some one else, probably, and have availed yourself of this as a means of parting; but you might have been franker with me, however, for you ought to be well aware, Ariiauai, that I am the last person in the world to wish to retain any one contrary to their

inclinations," cried Tiaii, knowing, at the same time, that there was not a word of truth in what she was advancing.

"Tiaii, Tiaii, how can you utter such folly, excepting to annoy, or cause me to make fresh protestations of my unswerving affection for your own saucy but lovely self?" he said in a half-vexed half-tender tone.

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Yes, you do, Tiaii; you are well aware I could have left you without even an explanation, much less reproach, had I pleased; but never did I love you more truly than at this very moment. Had I, like others do, have raised my hand to strike when you annoyed me, instead of caressing you into a good humour, I might now, perhaps, have more influence over you than at present is the case; but I never had the heart to raise a finger against you, satisfied to simply caution you, which brings down on me all your reproaches. Oh, Tiaii! you are a fearful tease; but never mind, come and let us be once more friends," and he endeavoured to encircle her with his outstretched arm, but she quickly evaded him.

She knew her power, and the length she might venture without fear of a final rupture, which she desired as little as he did. All she had said had emanated from pitiful spite, well knowing him to be her abject slave; but possessed of a tyrannical disposition, she determined on punishing him well for daring to listen to her enemies; thus neither gentle

word nor caress should he receive till the mood suited her. Ariiauai did all in his power to win her into forgiveness, but without effect, until, wearied out, he wandered forth, not caring whither, and totally unconscious of the brisk pace he was going at, when suddenly he found himself at Olamaie. Some miles now divided him from Tiaii, and a storm was lowering over the firmament, through which he would have to return. For a moment he hesitated. What if he absented himself till the morrow, and punish her in his turn? But no, the idea pleased him not; she might have cause then to believe her own wicked words, which was not to be thought of, for he knew her pride too well. Once certain that he had taken to another, she would never consent to live with him more. By the time he reached their house, he was drenched with rain; but he heeded it not, when he found Tiaii seated at the door awaiting him. He had feared she would carry out her threat, and return to her mother's for a few days; but no, her anxious face told a different tale.

She, on the other hand, fancied he might have fallen in with those who would only too gladly entice him from her, and her anger having died out, was as anxious for a reconciliation now, as she had been opposed to it before; in reality, being sincerely fond of her very attractive lover and prince, Taii threw her arms about his neck, and assured him she had ever been his true and faithful *vahine* (woman or wife); thus

they became once more friends. He promised never to doubt her again. Tiaii had provided an ample meal, which they now partook of, regardless of Ariiauai's wet clothes, which he had never thought of changing for a dry pareu. During the night he complained of not feeling well, which resulted in a shivering fit, succeeded by a raging fever, which confined him to his bed for some days.

Tiaii accused herself of being the cause of his illness, and felt dreadfully about it. Some of the natives are excellent doctors and doctresses,—for the women are as good as the men. They at times effect wonderful cures with their native medicines, composed of herbs found in the mountains; their properties are very powerful, however, and require a naturally good constitution to stand their effects. In the case of wounds, they rarely fail, it is said. Ariiauai was attended by these people, who, to make their cures the more remarkable, generally pronounce the case—no matter of what nature—a serious one, and did so in this instance, which frightened the foolish Tiaii half out of her wits.

“Never will I look at another man if Ariiauai dies,” she sobbed to these croakers, which produced a delighted expression on the invalid's face. He called her to him, when, taking her hand between his burning palms, with a tender loving caress, he said—

“My own Tiaii, I heard what you said, and oh, how happy your words have made me! I was always

uncertain as to the extent of your affection for me; now I am convinced you are all I could wish, my treasure; but have no fear, my sweet girl, I shall recover, no matter what those old fools say to the contrary. Why, your blessed words alone would be capable of renewing life within my veins, were I indeed as ill as they affirm; nor do I regret being laid up for a time, with such a nurse as my Tiaii."

"You love me so very much, dear Ariiauai?" she murmured low.

"Better than life; so you may imagine the effect your unfaithfulness would have had on me, Tiaii," he replied excitedly.

"Hush! hush! I will sing you to sleep;" and she chanted forth a monotonous hymn, whilst a lot of other women joined in chorus. Their mode of singing is peculiar yet agreeable, although nasal and invariably in choruses, each person assuming his part in the proper tone and time; the only drawback consists in the length of their performances, which is interminable. They will continue without cessation chanting their hymns for hours together, with apparently no fatigue whatever to themselves, whatever it may prove to their hearers.

Ariiauai duly recovered, as he had prognosticated; and oftentimes referred to the remark he had overheard from Tiaii's lips when ill, and she in deep grief. He seemed to consider it as a binding vow on her part, at which she would laugh, insisting she had only

said it to please him at the moment, knowing he was listening to all she uttered about him and his malady.

When Ariiauai made occasional trips among the islands, unaccompanied by Tiaii, she never joined the other girls in the promenades, keeping herself quietly at home till his return, well aware that her slightest movement was repeated to him. Fortunately, his absences were not of long duration when he left her behind, which was rare enough, or she might have tired of the *triste* life she had to lead at such times.

He was now sent on a mission to Bora Bora, a neighbouring island, whose king had been Pomare's first husband, from whom her subjects insisted on a divorce, in consequence of no family appearing in shape of heirs to her throne.

By her second husband, Ariifaaite, she had several sons, and an only daughter, whom she gave to Tapoe, the king, when an infant, according to the native custom, he also having remarried, but without issue. She thus deprived herself of her only girl to gratify her former husband, strange as it may appear.

Tiaii wept bitterly at parting with Ariiauai, who expected to be away longer than usual, and freely promised as he desired.

For some time she steadfastly kept her word, and went nowhere. Solitude at last became irksome, however, when she had neither heart nor desire to refuse the oft-repeated invitations of her companions, who, dressed up in their best finery, wreathed with

vines or flowers, started about sundown in quest of amusement. A certain street was the rendezvous for officers, civilians, soldiers, sailors, and kanorkers (natives) of both sexes, congregated in one noisy, boisterous mass of rowdies, and hither Tiaii accompanied her gay friends. At first she felt abashed, and regretted the step; but the taunts of the other girls induced her to repeat the experiment, which from reluctance became a positive liking to join in many descriptions of fun. If at times Ariiauai crossed her mind, his image was quickly dispelled by the appearance of a handsome young officer, who made a point of throwing himself into the most graceful positions for her especial benefit, as his repeated admiring glances in her direction indicated.

She was a tall, stout, healthy-looking girl, which formed quite a contrast to the sickly, dissipated creatures around her; it was this reason, probably, more than any other of her attractions, which caused Octave la Croix to single her out. She fell an easy conquest to his insinuating ways. From mere glances he made bold to offer her his arm; then an invitation to supper was given and accepted, after some little hesitation, which was quickly overruled by a pressure of the hand and a tender look into her eyes. Ariiauai returned sooner than was expected, and found his bird had flown; their house had been deserted for some time, and inquiries failed to satisfy him. When first told of her meetings with the young officer, he flew

into a perfect rage, and swore it was all false ; their machinations alone had driven her away. He was told to have but a little patience, and watch for himself, which he did do, and became convinced of her guilt. His agony of mind was fearful, but no earthly eye beheld it. In the woods he buried the heart-rending groans over his wrecked happiness, where he lay on the ground wishing to revenge himself, so furious did he feel. When he became calm, he determined on seeing Tiaii once more, ere they parted for ever. She had heard of his return, and knew not what to do, having already tired of her new *liaison*, and heartily rueing her folly in entering into such a one. Never in reality had her heart strayed from Ariiauai, whom she loved with all the fervour she was capable of ; whilst for Octave la Croix, it was but a momentary admiration for his handsome face, which quickly vanished. And now the knowledge of the blow her perfidious conduct would be to Ariiauai, almost caused her to hate the one who originated her downfall and disgrace. And what for ? A few fleeting moments of happiness.

She informed Octave of her intention to leave him. He expostulated, cajoled, reasoned, all to no effect ; she was as firm as a rock, much to his sorrow, as he had commenced to be attached to the daring, impetuous girl.

She returned to her once happy home, where Ariiauai was watching for her. They met in a little

wood some distance from human habitation, where Ariiauai was determined their final interview should pass, unheard by mortal ear, unseen by mortal eye. He was no longer the weak, fond lover, but the angry, injured man, which Tiaii failed not to perceive, as well as his altered, haggard appearance. So untidy, so changed in a few short hours, he looked at least ten years older; and so harsh and relentless, that Tiaii began to tremble. She fell on her knees, weeping bitterly, but uttering no word.

"Tiaii, what have you got to say for yourself?" he asked, after considerable silence, during which time he examined her from head to foot with a sad, mournful look. Never before had he seen her in this position, weeping at his feet. How she had fallen!

"Nothing! nothing! I have acted like a thorough native, as I am; but oh! Ariiauai, believe one thing—never for a moment has my heart or love for you wavered," she cried in agony.

"Tell me how it all occurred?" he said, in a commanding tone.

She did, from beginning to end; how she after a time tired of being so lonely, and was led to accept invitations from the other girls to join them in their promenades; how Octave la Croix scraped her acquaintance, and her passing fancy for his good-looking face, which ended in her culpability.

"Had you but taken me with you!" she moaned, with clasped hands, and an appealing look for pity, which remained unanswered.

"Tiaii, are you aware of the motive which induced this meeting between us for the last time? It was but to recall to your mind a promise, a sacred vow made by you last year, when I was ill. And now I shall take farewell of you."

"No! no! no! you will not be so relentless, so cruel. Oh, Ariiauai, by all the love you ever bore me, have pity now, let me be your slave, only don't abandon me thus," she cried wildly, throwing herself anew on the ground and clinging to his knees. He caught her arm and raised her to her feet. She was in error, he had not yet done with her.

"Hypocrite! do you suppose I believe your words? No doubt your French lover has tired of you, and you fancy to cajole me anew," he hissed forth, holding her at arm's length, with a fearful gripe.

"I deserve all your reproaches, and therefore I submit to them, as I would to any punishment you might inflict, but separate from you I never will. I will follow you anywhere, Ariiauai, no matter where you bend your steps, for I love you,—oh! how intensely, no words can tell." And once again she tried to cling to him.

"Tiaii, it never can, nor shall be. Why, every time I turned my back I should be devoured with fears and doubts. You are a deceitful, selfish coquette, who would stoop to anything for a few fresh gewgaws. There, out of my sight! I have for ever done with you." And with a violent shake and push,

she fell. He raised her up again, and shook her furiously, after showering numberless blows on her head, whilst he held on to her long back-hair, wound several times round his hand. To all this savage treatment she never uttered a moan, which seemed to exasperate him the more, while it satisfied the qualms of her conscience. (A native woman or girl conceives herself the better loved when thus maltreated.) He renewed his attack this time more savagely; and suddenly letting go his hold, hurled her away from him with great violence. In her fall her head came in contact with a sharp stone, through which she was severely cut, and the blood flowed from the wound until she became exhausted. The sight of this red stream sobered him at once. It was the very first time he had ever treated her in this brutal way, and, kneeling beside her, tried to stanch the wound, which, after some difficulty he succeeded in doing. But Tiaii looked very ghastly, and in great pain. He rose to seek assistance, which she quickly divined.

“Don’t leave me! oh, don’t leave me, Ariiauai!” she supplicated.

He could not resist her appeal, from the state she was in through his savage cruelty. Again he placed himself beside her, when she took his hand, and kissed it passionately.

“It is the hand that chastised you,” he murmured regretfully.

"I know it, but I deserved that, and more. Oh, Ariiauai, you will forgive your wicked but heart-broken Tiaii. Remember me under different circumstances, and say whether I am thus saved for anything. Where is all my old pride and temper gone for the sake of being pardoned by you? Who loves most now?" As she spake she had been getting nearer and nearer to him, till her head reposed on his shoulder, and his arms encircled her form. The contact dissipated any lingering feeling of hesitation about him.

Those who love much forgive much. This was Ariiauai's case; he preferred retaining Tiaii guilty than no Tiaii at all. Still, he never recovered his wonted health or cheerfulness. Day by day he became thinner and coughed incessantly. Pomare felt alarmed, and called in the French surgeons, who pronounced him in a consumption. He lingered on for awhile, then ceased to suffer.

The one who sorrowed most was undoubtedly Tiaii, who considered herself the cause of his premature death. His laying-out and funeral was a very grand affair, a temporary house being erected in the Queen's yard, draped with black, where the body of the young prince lay in state for a whole week. The day of the interment proved a fearfully stormy one, raining incessantly, and blowing a perfect hurricane. The concourse of people, assembled for the occasion, was immense; all the naval and military departments, residents and natives, some even from distant parts of

the island ; the women with their hair cut quite short (an emblem of deep mourning among them) ; the entire garrison, in full uniform, from the governor down to the midshipmen, followed the funeral *cortége*, up to their knees in mud, to the royal vault at Papawa. Minute guns fired the whole day long ; in fact, nothing due to royalty was omitted. The funeral service had ceased, having been read by the Protestant missionary in a most impressive manner ; and when the body was in the act of being lowered into the vault, the clouds dispersed, and the brilliant sun shone out in all her glory and splendour. This remarkable coincidence struck those present forcibly, but to the unhappy Taaii it appeared as a token of forgiveness and farewell.

The recital was over, and Taai much satisfied with the interest displayed by her auditors, who had not exhibited the slightest impatience at its length, for Taai had a retentive memory, and loved dearly to embellish her narrative, although doubtless the main facts were perfectly correct.

Although Hena had heard the story many times, it had affected her more than usually this day. Mr. Seymour felt sorry to see her continued emotion, and wished to offer a few words of well-directed sympathy. For this purpose he seated himself beside her, and taking her hand, kindly inquired what there was about Taai's narrative to sadden her so much.

"Surely you are no second Tiaii, are you?" he asked with a smile.

She shook her head, with quivering lip and humid eye.

"Don't despond, then, my little girl; Matoha will not be very hard-hearted, I'll venture to say."

She withdrew her hand quickly, and once more commenced weeping bitterly. De Lorme looked on, not the best pleased at Mr. Seymour's free and easy action, one which even he had never had the courage to attempt. He bit his lip at the action, scowled at his allusion to Matoha, and turned away in disgust at Hena's renewed tears and sobs. Could it be possible that Matoha stood towards her as Ariiauai, and he as Octave? The reflection was anything but agreeable, so he drew Mr. Seymour away, leaving her to sorrow uninterruptedly.

The moment they had departed, Hena started to her feet, and prepared to leave the bower also.

"Where are you going to?" inquired Taai.

"To seek Matoha, and tell him the whole truth. Oh, Taai! I cannot endure this anxiety much longer," and she pressed her temples wildly.

His haunts were well known to them both, but though Taai offered to accompany her, she preferred going quite alone, knowing how irritable he often was with the poor inoffensive girl, and how necessary it now was to keep him calm. She found him lying on the grass, with his face hidden from

view, so she approached him hesitatingly, for she feared him when in such dark moods. He felt her presence, but moved not. Still she seated herself by his side, and laid her cold trembling hand on his head.

“Matoha, I have come to talk to you, to confide in you, if you will only let me, and listen with calmness and patience, for indeed you will need both. Oh! my more than brother, the dear friend of all my life, hide not your face from poor miserable Hena; she needs but that to fill her cup of sorrow to overflowing. I am sorry, oh, so sorry! that I answered you as I did, and returned the flowers; but, Matoha, your reproaches were unjust, unmerited, and they wounded my already tried feelings; but see, I gathered them up again—here are some of them in my hand.” And she tried to raise his head, and at last succeeded, but he steadily kept his eyes averted.

“Oh, Matoha, why have you spoilt me? I never thought you would or could utter a harsh word to your little Hena, when you must have noticed how sad and unhappy she has been lately. Have you not remarked how thin I am getting, Matoha?” she questioned anxiously.

“Yes, I have, as well as every other change in you,” he replied moodily.

“Still you have failed to divine the true cause, and, wretched as you may be, I am no less so, whilst you are a strong robust man, and I but a feeble girl,” she said in a tremulous voice.

"Whose fault is it, Hena? not mine, surely?"

"No, no, I have no one to blame but myself; but you also are much changed. Why are you so cast down, Matoha?" she inquired tenderly.

"Because I find the love you refused me bestowed on a worthless foreigner for the mere asking, whereas I strove so hard to win it. I was told you could not love me as I wished; yet was I content, and 'almost satisfied, so long as I knew you preferred no other. Now I can almost foresee your sharing your unfortunate mother's fate,—becoming the plaything of an hour. Oh, Hena! it is this that makes me wretched," and he covered his face, as if to shut out the horrid vision.

"Have no fear of this for me, Matoha," she murmured.

"Yes, I have," he cried fiercely,—“you, who disregard me, who have been your devoted slave from babyhood upward, and can allow yourself to be won by a little flattery.”

"I have never been flattered by the one I love," she said tremulously.

"What! you dare confess that you do love, and to me, to my very face, miserable, worthless girl!" he exclaimed furiously, catching her hand and holding it in a vice-like gripe; "do you suppose I intend sitting still and coolly permit you to throw yourself away upon a man I hate, despise,—that I could strangle this minute?" he almost screamed.

"Matoha! Matoha! you are hurting me dreadfully," she gasped forth.

And he perceived with horror her lips and face turn livid. In his passion he had been perfectly unconscious how hard he was holding her little slender hand, and as he now opened his fingers, there it lay, discoloured and swollen.

"My God! what have I done? I never dreamed of harming you, Hena."

"I know you did not, Matoha. Do not look so woe-begone; this acute pain will soon pass," and she tried to smile to reassure him, but the attempt proved a wretched failure.

He rushed off, and soon returned with a cocoa-nut shell filled with cool water, into which he held the quivering hand.

"What a savage I have been! No wonder you cannot love such a brute as I," he groaned forth.

"Indeed you are not, Matoha, and I do love you, only not as you wish," she replied hesitatingly; and perceiving his sorrowful face, she laid her head on his shoulder as she had done many a time as a confiding child; the simple, innocent act displayed so much trust in him, that he then and there inwardly vowed to continue her friend and protector through life, happen what might.

Hena divined by his face what was passing in his mind, and availed herself of it, to pour into his ears the history of her unhappy love for Mr. Seymour:

how, from the very first moment she had seen him, she had become prepossessed in his favour, which sentiment steadily increased, although she had battled hard against it, and never saw him but she dreamt of him night after night, and thought unceasingly of him by day. She feared and despised De Lorme, yet supported his visits, in the hopes that sooner or later Mr. Seymour, her *beau idéal* of a man, would accompany him. It was these frequent disappointments that had preyed on her health, and caused the change he had noticed, and attributed to a different cause. Not only was she aware that her love remained unrequited, but that herself was regarded with supreme indifference. It was this bitter thought which had caused the light to go out of her life: nothing more interested her excepting the fact that her strength was rapidly declining, and consequently her days of suffering curtailed.

“Oh, Hena, Hena!” cried Matoha, touched to the soul by her confession; “under such circumstances how could you ever encourage Mr. De Lorme’s visits? Do you not see that Mr. Seymour may have been withheld from coming in consequence, so as not to interfere with his friend?” Matoha fancied this, because he could not comprehend any one being indifferent to Hena’s charms, the desolation of her tone causing him to forget self.

“I did not encourage these visits, Matoha; I merely submitted to them for the reason I before

mentioned; you ought to know how tenacious the heart is, how it clings to any and every chance of being appeased; nor has any action of mine deterred Mr. Seymour from coming,—he is cognizant of my feelings for Mr. De Lorme only too well. No, no, Matoha, he cares nothing for me: has he not advised my accepting you as a husband, so as to avoid any further persecution from Mr. De Lorme? Only imagine my feelings at such a suggestion coming from him!” sobbed the heart-broken girl.

“Hena, star of my life, don’t, pray don’t; I can bear anything better than your tears. Who knows what may yet await you?” he urged encouragingly.

“Ah, Matoha, you can talk thus because you can see and speak to me when you please; you know also of my sincere sisterly affection for you, whereas I—”

“Hena, what can I do for you? Only suggest something. I can never stand idle, seeing you so wretchedly unhappy.” And this man, who a few moments previous could have almost annihilated her for loving and being loved, was now puzzling his brain how he could succeed in realizing for her this dream of happiness, so powerfully had he been affected by her candour and plaintive tone. Not a thought of himself now occupied his mind, as he kept on mentally planning means to induce the presence of Mr. Seymour, which would probably result in his own eternal seclusion; so perfect was the love he

entertained for this fair young half-caste, not one selfish idea intermixed with it.

Hena sighed profoundly, but preferred leaving matters to take their own course; she considered "what was to be, would be."

CHAPTER VI.

THE EMPEROR'S FÊTE.

"I WONDER what rendered Hena so tearful this afternoon," mused Mr. Seymour half-aloud, as they returned home.

"What ! are you really so dull of comprehension ? Did you not perceive," inquired De Lorme, "that she was considering herself the heroine of that romantic tale Taai was entertaining us with, hoping to harrow up our feelings, but only succeeding with poor simple Hena, who was imagining Matoha pining for love of her, whilst she had thrown herself into the arms of Octave, *alias* Adolphe de Lorme ? Did you not notice how quickly she withdrew her hand at the mention of her name ? But, by the bye, I thought that act of yours totally unnecessary. You are by far too young a man, Seymour, to play a fatherly part, and I felt half-inclined to resent the liberty."

"By what right, may I ask?" inquired Mr. Seymour, much amused at De Lorme's manner of taking everything as a matter of course.

"That of her lover, what else?"

"In your opinion possibly, but I much doubt whether Hena would agree to your titling yourself thus," replied Mr. Seymour, in a tone that particularly annoyed and irritated De Lorme, who could not shut his eyes to the fact that Hena actually did permit certain advances on the part of Mr. Seymour, which she never had to him.

"Seymour, I have oft been puzzled to hear you talk so positively about things concerning Hena; can it be possible that you have, with all your high-flown ideas of morality, been actually stealing a march on me?" said De Lorme in an impertinent way.

"Let me caution you, De Lorme, to be more circumspect in your manner and insinuations when addressing me. I am the last man to quarrel, unless, indeed, such a thing be forced upon me," said Mr. Seymour coolly, but decisively.

"Nor I, Heaven knows; yet I cannot listen with patience to this system of sanctimonious preaching which you are continually pestering me with, Seymour, when I doubt your being one whit more moral than your neighbours," replied De Lorme, with some symptoms of impatience and anger.

"Such annoyance shall soon end, De Lorme; but with regard to sanctity, I never made any such mis-

representation, although, I trust, I am no unbeliever. As to morality, I honour its dictates and despise its contaminators. In what I advanced of Hena I heard from her lips but yesterday, never having seen her from the day, at Pai, when we stumbled on their house. Taai sought me out here, imploring me to see Hena, who was in great trouble. At her earnest solicitations, I followed her to the bower, where I found Hena much changed for the worse. What I then gleaned convinced me she disliked you and your attentions thoroughly."

"So you doubtless took advantage of the circumstance to put in a plausible word for yourself," interrupted De Lorme, altogether exasperated at what he was hearing.

"Not so, De Lorme; I entertain no predilection whatever for Hena, pretty as I must allow she is. But I did make a suggestion as to how she could relieve herself of your persecution."

"You dared do so?" cried De Lorme furiously.

"I did indeed; I advised her at once to marry Matoha, who, it seems, has long desired to make her his wife. And, De Lorme, as to stamping round and blaspheming as you are doing, it is perfectly useless. I have told you all, and shall now relieve you of my annoying presence, thanking you, however, for the hospitality you have shown me thus far. Whenever you need my advice or services, hesitate not to call on them."

"But why was all this kept secret from me? Why did you not, as a gentleman, inform me of it on your return?" roared De Lorme, beside himself with rage.

"Because it did not suit me. Good evening, De Lorme; I hope when we next meet you may be in a less stormy mood."

Mr. Seymour proceeded at once to the residence of a bachelor friend, where he was readily accommodated till he could suit himself better. Mr. Dubois, the gentlemen in question, was a government officer of a superior stamp to the generality,—highly educated and accomplished in the truest acceptation of the term; keeping aloof from everything unworthy, and ever ready with kindly advice or assistance when appealed to. Although not handsome, he possessed a prepossessing appearance, rather grave for his years, which perhaps caused those younger to shun his society. Not so, Seymour; from the commencement of their acquaintance there had been a great amount of sympathy between them, which had never proved the case with De Lorme, whose tastes and ideas were entirely opposite. Mr. Dubois was of those who travel much, notice much, and benefit much,—not always the result with others deriving the like advantages. He was grieved to hear of De Lorme's misunderstanding with his best friend, although the circumstances were withheld from him,—a discretion on the part of Mr. Seymour which he understood

and thoroughly appreciated. "*Mon cher*, you know you always were welcome, and never more so than at this moment," replied Mr. Dubois, with a renewed shake of the hand, in token of goodwill and amity.

De Lorme's passion wore itself out, at last, against Mr. Seymour, whom, however, he was glad to be rid of on any terms. Lately, his presence had become very irksome to him in many ways, and would now prove more so than ever, in consequence of a fixed determination on the part of De Lorme to obtain Hena by some means or other. He now set about forming a plan to effect his object. Heretofore he had been but attentive and impressive, preferring to win her love, if possible, for he could not but allow that without it half his anticipated delight in her possession would be marred, although he never doubted in gaining it when once she learned the extent of his own passion. Now he had decided on pushing the matter to a close, if for no other reason (he persuaded himself) than to spite Mr. Seymour, whose tacit interference and advice he chose to consider most unwarrantable and insolent. Jaques was highly disgusted when he heard he was to lose his favourite master; he had an interview, to obtain him a nice cottage, and to attend to the removal of his effects himself.

"I am very much obliged to you, my good fellow, but I fear it will be too much for you to attend to; besides which, Mr. De Lorme might not like it," said Mr. Seymour kindly.

"Let me ask him, Sir, before you get any one else; do, pray, now? No one will manage for you as I could; and as to the little extra work, why I can get a native boy to help me a bit," pleaded Jaques. De Lorme readily acceded to his request to superintend both establishments, as he did not wish to lose sight of Mr. Seymour; through Jaques, he concluded, could easily be gleaned all he desired to know about his doings.

In a few days, Mr. Seymour found himself admirably lodged in a commodious cottage (for Papeete) a little way from town, where he had the luxury of being alone under his palm-tree, several of which stood on the smooth green lawn before his door, as also other trees of a more shady nature. These delights he owed to the active Jaques, who felt in all his glory, not only plenty to occupy his time and mind, but likewise in earning the amount necessary to purchase him a few comforts in future years, when he could no longer work as he now did; for Mr. Seymour was no niggard master, as Jaques well knew by past experience.

Mitua's husband, Hena's adopted father, was a drunken, worthless fellow, capable of any contemptible action for the sake of rum, that destroyer of many a peaceful home. To him De Lorme appealed for aid, and, after regaling his palate lavishly, elicited the promise he desired. The abject wretch expressed himself so disgustingly as to even shock his hearer,

who, covering his face, after ridding himself of the half-drunken Poonah, groaned in agony of thought at the step he had but just taken,—a contemptible one, he knew. Never before had he thus demeaned himself in carrying out an intrigue of the kind, and nothing but the really desperate nature of his love could have induced him thus to pursue Hena. Had it been a mere whim, he would have tired long before of his ineffectual attempts to gain her affection, being by nature indolent and volatile in the extreme. In this instance, however, the very opposition seemed to call forth to a greater extent than ever the fire and evil of his disposition, until he felt that he could not exist without her.

“Oh, Hena, my beautiful love, why do you drive me to act in a way that even degrades me in my own eyes? Why not respond in some way to this overflowing heart? It is yours, wholly yours, its every throb, its every thought. Oh, how happy would you be under my protection! My whole life should be devoted to your comfort. Your slightest wish should be gratified. Yet you shun me, treat me with studied coldness, whilst towards others you are most considerate.” Such reflections as these flitted across his brain often. The drunken reprobate of a Poonah had disappeared.

When next he saw Hena, and found her hand bound up, he particularly inquired how she had injured herself, which she asserted was a mere accident,

but her face belied her word; she was no adept at deception, which soon aided him in divining the truth; when he raved and stormed at Matoha furiously, despite her assurance that he had never meant to harm her. Although she struggled to prevent him, he succeeded in untying the bandages, and examining the wound for himself, which he did with the utmost tenderness.

“Thank God we are alone at last, my darling Hena, so that I can give vent to my feelings for your beautiful self. Surely you could not have been blind thus far to the extent of my affection, which now forms part of my very existence. Without you, beloved one, life is worthless. I never before loved, never before was absorbed in the thoughts of another as I am of you. Oh, Hena, reject not my prayer; drive me not to despair. Thus far I desisted from expressing myself openly, fearing you had not learned to love me; but now I fear everything,—the sight of that poor maimed hand, the brutality of those about, as also their influence over you.” As he spoke he kept approaching her nearer and nearer. She became alarmed at his devouring looks, and tried to move farther off; but he quickly perceived her design, and prevented her doing so by encircling her waist with his arm.

“Don’t, pray don’t, Mr. De Lorme,” she implored, as she felt his hot breath fan her cheek.

“Have no fear, my sweet girl, I would not injure you for worlds; but, Hena, promise only to accord me

time, and I swear I will teach you to love me but a little less intensely than I love you?"

"Pray, let me go, Mr. De Lorme; I can listen to you just as well at a little distance. Oh dear, what shall I do?" she cried, now almost in despair at his devouring gaze.

"I submit, my Hena; only accept my love, and you will never know regret. I am aware of what your lovely dark eyes are capable. There, don't struggle; give me but one little kiss, and I will then release you." Suiting the action to the word, he stooped, and pressed his burning lips to hers. A piercing shriek brought Taai, who was not far off, to her side, when she found her trembling on the mat, panting in apparent agony: her large eyes widely distended, her nostrils dilated, as if in mortal terror.

"What is the matter? what has happened?" asked Taai in alarm, addressing De Lorme, who stood by her side, materially crest-fallen, and looking with dismay at Hena. Without heeding Taai, he fell on his knees and besought the insulted girl's pardon, assuring her he had never meant anything disrespectful. He thought a kiss allowable after the explanation he had made, but never would he so offend again; nor would he ever have taken the liberty, had he for a moment supposed it would have so agitated her. He implored for one little word or look of forgiveness ere he departed, to all of which Hena maintained a

rigid silence, steadily keeping her eyes closed the while, till Taai interfered, and begged him take his departure at once; which he most tardily did, more in love than ever, if possible, since he had held her for a moment in a loving embrace—one never to be forgotten by him.

The Emperor's *fête*, the 15th of August, is always celebrated with considerable *éclat*. Strangers from surrounding islands, and the various districts, flock in to Papeeté for the occasion, which lasts three days. It consists of a series of games, and a repast, provided for the natives in the Government grounds. The games include climbing the greasy pole for prizes, for those fortunate enough to get them by reaching the summit, jumping in sacks, diving for ducks, canoe and boat races, etc. The prettiest sight of all is the arrival of the canoes from various districts, with awnings of white cloth, ornamented with fringes of various colours, made out of the bark of trees, and coloured according to taste; namely, orange and red, white, etc. On the water the effect is brilliant. Their racing canoes are excessively long, each containing some fifty or sixty paddlers, nude to the waist, with green vines twisted fantastically round their heads. They keep perfect time (as usual, to the music of the endless drum) as they change their paddles from side to side, shooting through the water with extraordinary rapidity. Their figure-heads are of an original kind, usually animals—a dog, horse,

bull, etc. The chief of one of the districts being lame, he completed the figure-head of his canoe by sitting on the inanimate animal with a dignity truly laughable.

Mr. Seymour accompanied the Fentons on their round of sight-seeing, to gratify Mary, who, like all young people, was desirous of participating in everything, from hearing the Te Deum at seven A.M. to witnessing the *coup d'artifice* in the Government gardens, at eight P.M. An incongruous mass is usually here collected, amusing themselves in all manner of ways. Native singing and dancing may, on these occasions, be heard and seen to perfection. The latter is quite characteristic, consisting of an endless number of figures, performed by some sixty or more men facing each other, with a conductor, *bâton* in hand, who gives them the cue to the various changes; the music unvarying, consisting of clapping hands to the beat of the drum. The figures are composed of various actions of the body and its members, such as jumping up, squatting down, extending one hand, then the other, the same with their legs, throwing down their hats, picking them up, putting them on, etc. This dance is called the "upa upa." The women join in, by one or two at the time, running into the middle of the line, and then, for a few seconds, twisting their bodies into the most grotesque shapes imaginable. The Government grounds present quite a pretty appearance during the *fêtes*—so

animated and gipsy-like. The various groups of performers faintly perceptible, through a most dismal light emitted from a flickering oil lamp on the ground ; scattered round which are parties of singers, chanting their monotonous hymns, whilst spectators of all sexes and nations are divided about, admiring the illuminations fronting the Government offices, as also the fireworks, of rather an inferior description, and set off at somewhat lengthy intervals, which, nevertheless, affords pleasure to the easily entertained natives. Thus every one seems to enjoy himself, after his own peculiar fashion and humour.

What a set of grown-up children are these, the self-same natives, with their innate simplicity, yet dignity ! And how fond are they of imitating anything that strikes their fancy—to personate naval or military men,—their perfect delight in sporting the costume, with a *naïveté* truly irresistible,—the stripes, according to their respective grades, being made out of the inner bark, and the epaulettes out of the wood, of the puroa and orange trees ; at a little distance off actually resembling hollyhock.

Many of their primitive customs are beginning to be neglected now. They no longer, as formerly, hold their queen or chiefs in holy awe, fearful of their touching an article of their wearing apparel, from the idea that, by so doing, they would become maimed. Even Europeans, long residing among the islands, seem to imbibe these superstitious notions ; an instance of which

came under the writer's eye. A respectable mechanic, who caught a stiff-neck through a violent cold, could not be divested of the impression, that it had been solely produced by his having worn a cravat belonging to the Queen's husband, Ariifaaite.

Formerly it was customary for individuals of the humble class to sweep the roads before their chiefs passed over them. For this ceremony, armed with brooms, they hopped like a parcel of frogs, clearing the path for the august feet. Nowadays they are more hail-fellow-well-met,—esteeming them as others might their parents, although the natives pay but little respect to these; children abuse, strike, and call their parents foul names, *sans façon*, which familiarity is scarcely to be wondered at, from the common tenor of their lives; for, with few exceptions their houses are composed of but one room, occupied by the entire family as a sleeping apartment. That, and the plainness of their language, precludes respect in any form being shown to the elders. They are devoted to the young of anything, biped or quadruped: thus a sucking-pig or kitten is cared for with nearly as much attention as a child: but when once they grow a little bigger, they are, like them, left entirely to their own resources—go, come, and do as they please. A child is never questioned, and rarely reprov'd, no matter what its offence. Their names, and the sources from whence derived, is another peculiarity, bordering very much on the re-

diculous, the most trifling and absurd causes producing a name; for example: 'po,' signifies coughing, 'mare,' night.

A former king was seized with a violent fit of coughing, one night; he consequently adopted the name of 'Pomare,' which has descended to the reigning families, male or female. If a dying person fastens their eye on any article, after death some member of the family is certain to be named the same, whether it be a chop, pitcher, trunk, or a dress, pareu, or handkerchief. Taai means "journey;" she was so called because born during a voyage made by her mother. They likewise enjoy the privilege of changing their names as it suits their fancy. Of their patrimonies they are particularly proud, disputing the same to the last inch, when their rights are invaded. Oftentimes two or three claimants appear for the same piece of ground, when an "aufau fetu" is called, which consists of a sort of jury of friends, who sit in a ring round a spokesman, who explains the subject under dispute, and points out, on the sand before him, the position of the land, etc. Such trials are usually decided in favour of the claimant whose memory serves him best as to the period back when his family possessed it; for this purpose children when young are taught their genealogies by heart, in case of any such land question arising.

They compose a sort of doggrel verse for their Himenes (as all their songs are called) on any sub-

ject that presents itself,—a custom prevailing among most savage nations, particularly the Africans. The word Himenes is taken from the English “hymn,” introduced by the first missionaries; the signification of which seems to be but little comprehended, judging by their own compositions, which are generally of the most obscene kind, chanted in an agreeable though monotonous tone, by the hour together, as well as on all occasions during sickness and death, as well as at festivities of all sorts.

After this slight digression it is necessary to return to this “August *fête*” and the Fentons, who are returning, from having witnessed the boat and canoe races, from the deck of a French man-of-war, lying in harbour; where a select party had been invited to be present at the awarding of the prizes by the Governor in person. They met Taai, who like the rest of her sex was dressed in her best, only, unlike many, she wore a hat instead of the wreaths of all colours, with the graceful reua-reua floating in the air, whilst others, still more excitable, had their shoulders and waists decorated with green vines like the men.

This reua-reua decoration is made from the top of the cocoa-nut-tree, to obtain which the tree is destroyed. Under this grows a delicious cabbage, which is eaten as a salad, and much relished by strangers.

“Yes, I see Taai, but not Hena,” replied Mr. Seymour, when Mary called his attention in her direction.

“Hena is far too timid to venture among such a

crowd ; I have never on any such occasion met her, unless with the Sisters and other girls, as at the Te Deum this morning. Did you not see her ? she was seated beside Sœur Agatha, her favourite teacher ; I always told Hena her predilections were invariably for the beautiful."

"Surely you do not call Taai a beauty, do you ? Yet there seems to exist a great degree of friendship and attachment between them," said Mr. Seymour.

"Actually, Mr. Seymour, I do consider Taai very pretty ; I always admired her frank, joyous character ; in disposition she is as happy and contented as her eyes are large and bright. I can easily fancy her up to any fun or mischief."

"Or intrigue," quietly rejoined Mr. Seymour.

"All natives are inclined that way more or less, but why Taai in particular, Mr. Seymour?" inquired Mary with curiosity.

"For the very reason that she is a native," was Mr. Seymour's evasive reply.

The subject of their remarks came sufficiently near, to enable Mary to inquire after Hena.

"She is well, thank you, with the exception of her hand, which has been hurt," replied Taai, giving a covert glance at Mr. Seymour.

"How did she injure it?" inquired Mary, more for the sake of making a remark than real interest in the fact.

"Somebody hurt it by mistake; she suffered a good deal at first, but it is now nearly well." Taai noticed Mr. Seymour's frown at the mention of the somebody, whom he evidently mistook for another.

"Tell her to come and see me, Taai," said Mary kindly; "I have not been able to speak to her for such a time."

"I can't get her to stir out any more this morning. It was the Sisters who would not take No for an answer; Hena thought it was through interest for her, but I knew better, her voice was what they wanted," said Taai, with a wicked laugh as she disappeared among the crowd.

Mr. Seymour seemed too much occupied noticing what was passing round him to heed much what Taai had said; like Mary, he was excessively amused. The ponchos worn by many, particularly attracted his attention; some made of cloth or flannel, trimmed with purea fringe; others in satin and silk, plentifully ornamented with the reua-reua, which must have caused the destruction of many a cocoa-nut-tree, (at least twenty for each poncho, trimmed as they were); but what cares a native chief when making a display is in view?

Too much of a good thing is rarely appreciated, so it was with the *fête* of the 15th of August.

The Fenton party returned home tired out, and decided on not attending the ball for the occasion, given at Government House, much to Mary's chagrin, who

had hoped to accompany her mother for the first time in public, which was not at all appeased by Mr. Seymour remarking, that she had got plenty of time before her to make a commotion in the world.

Taai likewise soon wearied, and left the town and its bustle and noise behind her. As she threw herself down on the grass beside Hena, she could not but openly avow that the quiet, calm, solitude of the country was a thousand times preferable to what she had quitted. When Hena expressed surprise at her early return, she said she would have remained longer had there been any fun going on, but even the number of tipsy people were fewer than usual. "Besides, Hena, I thought you would like to hear that I had met Mr. Seymour," was the pith of her remark.

Hena's pale face at once lighted up; the mere mention of that name brought brightness to her eyes and gladness to her heart. Many times over, she made Taai repeat how he had looked, what he had said, etc., which she did with her usual willingness to gratify Hena, who sat before her with clasped hands and open mouth, drinking in with avidity every word which fell from Taai's lips, as if she had been an oracle. Poor girl! how many hours did she pass absorbed in silent sad thought, as her drooping head and heavy eye indicated to the now two watchful friends, near, yet apart from her, who saw her pining

before their eyes, but were unable to bring comfort to her craving heart !

Matoha was wellnigh distracted, and would have rendered her as light-hearted and happy, cost what it might to his own feelings ; but alas, he knew not what to do. Like Taai, he disliked Mr. Seymour's cold formal manner, and could not believe him capable of ever rendering Hena happy ; how differently thought she ! Here her native blood showed itself : she would rather have been his slave than anybody else's wife ; for his sake she would have submitted to any degradation, without an after regret ; to live in his presence would be bliss, out of it misery and untold wretchedness.

Fortunately for her, Mr. Seymour was not one to take undue advantage of such a passion, even had he been aware of its existence, which he certainly was not ; but Matoha knew too well the tenacity of the heart, to attempt any expostulation with her ; all he could do was to look on in silence.

It was Jaques who had been charged by Mr. Seymour to pack up his things and transport them from one cottage to the other ; in the course of which he was summoned by De Lorme, and hurried forthwith into his presence.

“What have you got there ?” inquired De Lorme, pointing to something Jaques held, which had quickly caught his eye.

It was reluctantly handed to him, and proved a

daguerreotype case, which was speedily opened and examined, producing an exclamation of admiration from De Lorme.

"What a beautiful girl! I am not surprised at Seymour's preaching morality, he may even be sincere," he muttered below his breath.

"Jaques, where is that old drunkard Poonah? he has failed to make his appearance for several days now," he said aloud.

"Probably he is regaling himself on the last napoleon you gave him, Sir."

"And pray how came you to be acquainted with that interesting fact?"

"He tells everything, Sir; a native is never to be trusted."

"Possibly not, when prying eyes are round."

"Indeed, Sir, you are mistaken."

"Nonsense, man! I am no fool; but have a care, I know how to treat listeners in a manner that renders them deaf for awhile," cried De Lorme angrily.

"I am not in the habit of prowling about doors, Sir; indeed I have enough to do to attend to my own duties and business, without meddling in that of others," replied Jaques with assumed dignity.

"Well, well, I am glad to hear you say this; my remark was merely meant as a hint, it can do no harm and may do good. Find this old idiot, and bring him here this evening, do you hear?"

When alone he strode up and down the room, talking to himself.

“Hena’s manner becomes more repelling daily, the wayward, arrogant girl; I shall yet live to have my revenge out of her, though; she shall pay dearly for all I have suffered.”

When Poonah made his tardy appearance at last, he determined to bring matters to a speedy conclusion, and to overrule all opposition to his brutal plans, considering that Hena could not do better than throw herself into such a generous lover’s arms. And he rejoiced over the pleasant prospect in store for himself, as he intended palming his whole kith and kin on De Lorme the moment she should be installed at his cottage as its mistress.

De Lorme still entertained fears of his ultimate success, which were gainsaid by Poonah.

“Better believe me, all the native girls are alike,—they can be won over in time,—plenty of money is all that is necessary,” stammered out the low wretch, always half-inebriated.

De Lorme was only too glad to believe him, and that Hena’s present coyness was the effect of some ridiculous notions crammed into her whilst at the convent, which would eventually wear off. He could have been duped into crediting anything that would tend to lighten his heavy heart, consequent on her sullenness ever since the day he embraced her by force. He could no longer blind himself to the fact,

that she really did dislike him, and avoided, to the utmost of her power, his society. These impressions drove him wellnigh into despair, but none the less desperate; on the contrary, like most unattainable objects vainly grasped at, the more difficulties presented themselves, the more intense became his desires, till they so completely mastered his every thought, that he ended by shunning all society but those who connected him in some way with Hena. Thus Poonah, disgusting as he was, proved far from disagreeable. An interview sought with even avidity, if he had nothing interesting to narrate, at least he had been in her presence, spoken to her, or perhaps touched by accident her dress; such trifles as these had now become of moment to him; and a fearful dread that Matoha, after all, was her preference. To satisfy himself on this point, he met Taai frequently, who on each occasion repeated the assertion, that Hena regarded Matoha with but a sisterly affection. He used to complain bitterly to Taai of the little progress he made in gaining Hena's favour, until at length he drew from her the true reason for Hena's dislike and coldness. She loved another, and who could that other be but Matoha? why, Mr. Seymour, of course.

Had a cannon ball been discharged at his elbow, he could not have been more startled and bewildered. It could not be possible! Why, she did not know him; he had never paid her the slightest attention; he did not suppose they had exchanged a dozen words

together; he had never heard of such madness, such boldness; she must be lost to all decency.

"Why? because she loves somebody else better than yourself?" inquired Taai tauntingly, who had been quietly listening to his invectives.

"Don't you know, girl, that it is the most unwarrantable thing in the world, bestowing your affections unasked?"

"And what have you been doing, pray?" asked Taai with a grin.

"I of course allude to your sex alone, ignoramus; it is a man's province to make all advances."

"And when they are not agreeable, withdraw them, eh?"

"Yes, if they can, Taai," he added with a deep-drawn sigh.

"Then the sooner you can the better, let me tell you; for any further advances on your part will be quite useless, I warn you; whatever your opinion is, it does not alter the fact that she loves this hatefully cold Englishman, and will do so as long as she lives, which will not be a very great while if she continues pining as she has been doing ever since she first saw him, on the most unlucky day of our lives," she said sorrowfully. "Such being the case, you may perceive, Mr. De Lorme, that your chances could not well be smaller," continued Taai seriously, wishing, if possible, to relieve Hena definitely of his presence.

"Oh, Taai! do not say that; be my friend; I know

you have considerable influence over Hena, use it in my favour, and you will never have cause to regret it, believe me," he implored.

"To be candid, Mr. De Lorme, Hena is deaf to all argument."

"But she will effect nothing with Seymour, who is cold and selfish, incapable of rendering such a girl as Hena happy. I have resided long enough with him to understand his character and disposition thoroughly. Catch him sacrificing his pleasure or comfort to satisfy a whim of anybody's. And as to the natives, he detests them and their habits and customs; would consider himself degraded to have anything to do with any of them. Besides which, he is engaged to a beautiful girl in England." De Lorme thought he might as well tell a good story while he was about it, without any regard to truth.

"How do you know?" asked Taai.

"I have seen her likeness, and if you choose you can see it, and show it to Hena as well; perhaps it might have a good effect on the stupid girl?" he questioned.

"Or a bad one," suggested Taai.

"Not if she has a morsel of pride left," exclaimed De Lorme angrily.

"How can you talk so absurdly, Mr. De Lorme? Hena is neither wanting in delicacy nor pride, which I cannot say for everybody I am acquainted with. You are incapable of judging, because you really do not

know her. A strange girl she may be, with peculiar ideas and ways, different to anybody I ever saw, but there is very little of the native about her. Where she loved much, she might stoop much; but where she did not, nothing in the shape of flattery, presents, or promises would affect her one jot," said Taai warmly.

"We shall see," replied De Lorme shortly. Taai, of course, related this conversation to Hena, and besought her with tears to waste no more thought on Mr. Seymour.

"Why try to urge me to an impossibility, Taai? I have told you often enough that I have endeavoured to forget his image, but it is useless; he is my fate, be it for good or bad, life or death, and I accept the consequences. I felt it from almost the first moment we met; when his eyes were on me, such a feeling stole over my frame as I never before experienced. When I ceased to see him, such desponding and utter desolation took possession of me as to amount to agony. Taai, I cannot endure it much longer; and when I do cease to exist, who is there to mourn for poor Hena but Matoha and yourself, and both of you have every reason to consider such an event a happy release, I am sure," said Hena, sadly, yet with dry eyes,—all her tears had been shed long since.

"Hena, for pity's sake do not talk in this way, unless you wish to render me wretched for the whole

day. Why, in the name of fortune, are you not more like me, amusing yourself with anything that comes handy, as you perceive I do? What is the use of moping and fretting oneself into a skeleton? After all, who for—the men? Why, the whole mob are not worth a thought, much less a tear. They make a deal of us as long as it suits their convenience, then get rid of our company as a useless nuisance. I have seen enough of this work to render me as heartless as themselves. Where is the man alive who could cause me to cease eating, sleeping, or laughing? Oh, Hena! just do as I do; snap your fingers when once you have obtained all you want out of them,” said Taai, in a half-jesting, half-serious tone.

“Taai, I love you very much, but we think and feel very differently on many subjects. Do you know, I fancy this De Lorme has been making up this story of Mr. Seymour’s engagement for some purpose of his own. What is your opinion, dear?” and she nestled closer to Taai’s side, hoping she would confirm her words, and relieve her of this extra load of sorrow, which the idea of Mr. Seymour’s loving any one else could not but produce.

“I don’t know, Hena; he speaks as if it might really be true, and appeared to feel very much your giving your heart to one who could make you no return. What if we ask to see the likeness?”

“No, no, no, I could not endure to look at it!”

cried Hena, covering her eyes as if to shut out the sight.

“Very well, dear; it was only meant to please you that I suggested such a thing,” said Taai soothingly.

There was a lengthy silence maintained by both parties. At last Hena held up her head, and asked Taai, with a faint blush, whether she had any curiosity about seeing this same likeness. Her tone indicated the dawning of a desire on her own part, which Taai perceived instantly, and quickly replied in the affirmative. She was therefore dispatched forthwith to obtain it; for when once Hena had decided on examining this fortunate girl's face, whoever she might be, her impatience grew insupportable. Taai met De Lorme, who unfortunately had it not, but would endeavour to obtain it that evening, and bring it up to Hena himself. Taai tried to dissuade this step, offering to call again herself, which he steadily opposed. If Hena really wished to see the likeness, she must accept his visit with it; on no other condition should she be gratified. And so it had to be arranged, reluctantly enough, by Taai.

This trifling circumstance worried Hena into a perfect fever during the intervening hours; she could scarcely rest a moment stationary.

“I find it dreadfully hot to-day, Taai!” she exclaimed. “Just feel my head, how it burns. Come and let us have a plunge; the water may refresh me.”

Taai, who was perfectly ignorant of the evil effect of such a thing as a cold bath when suffering from fever, (a method usually adopted by the natives, oftentimes with most injurious results,) readily acquiesced, and they started off in the direction of the river, where De Lorme had met his evil genius, and Hena her fate.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MINIATURE.

THERE had been no great difficulty in obtaining the miniature-case from Jaques, which De Lorme slipped quietly into his pocket when alone, and soon after bent his steps in the direction where his thoughts constantly strayed. He found Hena there, and was much struck at her flushed agitated appearance; she, who had never any colour of late, displayed now a vivid tinge on either cheek, whilst her eyes had a bright glitter in them, which he did not like to see. Her entire expression was altered and most strange; in short, she hurriedly stretched forth her hand to obtain possession of that which she had been for hours back so longing to see. Her hand was seized and held firmly by De Lorme, who understood the action, yet cruelly and wilfully seemed not to.

“No, no, I want the picture,” said Hena, struggling to free her imprisoned hand.

He at once released it, its dry parched heat making him shudder with a nameless fear.

"Hena, a few words of explanation are necessary ere I give what I perceive you are so very anxious to obtain," he said softly. "It was only in consequence of Taai's information respecting your feelings that led me to divulge what I did. In gratifying your curiosity, remember, I am about committing a great breach of good-breeding, one that may lead me into a serious quarrel with Mr. Seymour; but to please you, Hena, I would do much more, run far greater risks than even this. Your happiness is of so much consequence to me, that were Seymour capable of returning your love I would do all in my power to bring you together. Ignorant as I was of your sentiments, how frequently have I urged him to accompany me in my visits here; with what result you can judge. And when I was unable to keep to myself the deep admiration, the fervent love you had inspired me with from the first, he would but jeer and sneer at what he was pleased to term my absurd enthusiasm, my gross folly. Ah, Hena! it drove me wild to hear him thus slightly speak of such an angel as yourself, whom I would not exchange for all the peerless beauties Europe could ever boast of. I could stand such impertinence, such gratuitous insults aimed at the girl of my choice no longer, and we consequently parted on bad terms. I now ask you, Hena, if such devoted love as mine ought to

be worthless in your eyes? What more can I do to prove its intensity? Without you life would be an incumbrance. Once convince me that my chance of gaining your affections is hopeless, and I will take a speedy means of terminating it."

This was a last shaft De Lorme aimed in pure desperation. His tone had been soft and tender, yet respectful withal.

Hena sat by him in silence; as yet, not a word had escaped her as regarded Mr. Seymour. Each one fell as so much molten lead on her ear, and completely crushed the already seared heart. Even De Lorme, selfish as he was, would have regretted his misrepresentations, had he conceived the fearful end they would work. All he saw was burning tears of shame course down her thin cheek, at the thought of Mr. Seymour's contempt, so opposite to what she had ever supposed. His manner had ever been kind, on the few occasions they had met, so that it had deceived her into fancying that he entertained no dislike, but rather an interest in her fate, which De Lorme's words had entirely disproved, so very plausible did they seem to her morbid mind. Fears now arose that if her passion for Mr. Seymour should ever reach his ears, he might consider it an unpardonable presumption; so she wildly implored De Lorme to keep her secret, which he most gladly promised to do, at the same time handing her the likeness. It had become now of minor importance, although her hand

trembled as she took it, with a look at De Lorme that smote him to the heart, so plainly did it portray a crushed spirit. He already began to regret the part he had played, and felt nervous as to the consequences. Hena gazed long and earnestly on the beautiful face. It personated a young girl of not more than sixteen years of age, with dark eyes and hair, her features delicately moulded, and the contour of her face a perfect oval. She could not wonder at any one loving such a creature, who seemed to be born to happiness; yet she was separated from her lover. How dreadful this was Hena only too well knew, for although she breathed the same air, trod the same ground, and dreamed the same dreams (for were they not both in love?) as Mr. Seymour, yet might have been thousands of miles from her, so seldom did they meet. Even to catch a glimpse of his person, was a luxury denied her, timidity holding her back from doing much, which she might otherwise have attempted, in the hope of obtaining she knew not what. She remained so long in the same position that De Lorme became alarmed; but Taai was curious, and, anxious to get a peep herself, approached more nearly for this purpose, startling Hena from her day-dream; she at once handed back the case without one word of comment.

“Hena, will you not try and think a little more kindly of me, now that you seem convinced of the truth of my statement?” pleaded De Lorme. “Pro-

mise to receive me less coldly in the future, and I will be content to abide the rest."

"What do you mean by rest, Mr. De Lorme?" she inquired in an icy tone.

"When you will award me that which I have craved after, for months back,—your love? My sole object in this life is that one donation. Oh, refuse me not, Hena!" he cried passionately, seizing her hands, and covering them with passionate kisses.

Hena snatched them from him, almost savagely, and arose with dignity; that peculiar glitter in her eye, increasing as she spoke.

"Mr. De Lorme, I beg you to listen to me, for the very last time. The hopes you express can never be realized by me; for your society I have the most intense distaste; for yourself a repugnance that can never be effaced, and I beg you never more to come hither. If you do, I shall appeal to one who will protect me from insult, cost him what it may; and now farewell, Sir."

"Not till you have heard what I have to say, Hena," he cried furiously.

"I will listen to nothing more. How dare you oppose my movements? Ay! you may frown as much as you please; no gesture of yours can intimidate me, rest assured. I was not mistaken when I judged your character; delicacy of feeling is unknown to you, or you never would have selected such a moment to plead your suit, which I scorn." And she stood before him

with heaving chest and flashing eyes, as he once before had seen her acting towards Matoha. Her anger was genuine.

“Your anger would be more worthy and becoming, were it induced by a different cause, my pretty little vixen,” said De Lorme scornfully. “When a rejected passion alone excites the sparks from your beautiful eyes, agitates your heart, and instigates you to use harsh undeserved reproaches, their effect is completely lost on me. After what has passed, any further *ménagement* on my part would be useless, and certainly unappreciated by one of your temperament; but mark well my words, Hena,—mine you shall be, sooner than you may imagine. I shall then have an opportunity of settling any difference between us, when it suits me, by taking full revenge from those tempting lips for the ill use they have been put to to-day. Never fear,—when fair means fail, another alternative remains to be essayed, frequently with far more success. When we two met, Hena, it certainly could never have been to part thus. I am a determined fellow, particularly in *les affaires du cœur*, *Mademoiselle*. I have now the honour to say *au revoir*,” and he bowed low to the astonished girls, as he quitted the bower.

Taai burst out into a roar of laughter. “Why, Hena, how he talked! one might suppose him to be a prince of pirates, intending to carry you off by force, with his barque at hand; instead of which, he

is but a Government officer, who does not even possess a canoe, much less a ship."

"He is a hard-hearted, bad man, Taai, capable of attempting anything base and mean, or he would never have threatened a poor miserable sufferer like me. Oh! what shall I do? what is going to become of me?" she moaned, with clasped hands; her momentary courage having died out, left her more timid and helpless than ever.

"Don't be foolish, Hena; what, after all, can he do? it was all a boast, believe me."

"Perhaps not; for, Taai, have you noticed how very free your father has been with money lately? where does he get it? besides which, I have caught him examining me in a covert sort of way, which makes me shudder when I think of it. You know, dear Taai, much as I loved Matoha and you, I never could bear Poonah, his principles are so bad. Do you think he can be in De Lorme's pay?" and she looked anxiously into Taai's face.

"Goodness knows; he would do almost anything for drink, as you know, Hena, and he has been very much under the effects of it lately, I think, by his brutal conduct to Matoha; but pray do not cry and make yourself more miserable about a mere supposition. No harm can ever come to you, whilst Matoha and I are by."

"Yes; but Matoha must be away now, for I have not seen him for some time."

"No, he is not, Hena ; he keeps aloof, because he can't bear to see your wretchedness," said Taai.

"Oh, Taai, make him come quick ; but stay, don't leave me for the world, I feel so terrified, and my head aches fearfully."

That same night she was attacked with a raging fever and partial delirium. Sorrow and misgivings had done their usual work on a delicate sensitive frame, and she was left to be killed or cured by native nurses and powerful remedies.

The European mail had arrived, when the usual rush was made for letters and papers. De Lorme formed one of the crowd, but his patience at length gave way at the distant prospect of being attended to. He therefore returned, and dispatched Jaques for whatever might have arrived for him to his address. As he was whiling away the interim, humming an operatic air, who should suddenly make his appearance but Poonah ?

"Well, does Hena still continue ill ?" he asked, in a sneering tone.

"Yes, indeed, she is as bad as she can well be," said Poonah, quite sober now.

"Nonsense, you old humbugging reprobate, I don't intend she shall slip through my fingers by any such trumped-up story ; so have a care."

"Come and judge for yourself then, if she is not sick enough. Why, her head is all wrong, and she talks such queer things, too ; but where she got the

idea I meant to harm her I can't tell, yet she repeats it over and over again, so that my woman and Taai believe it. If she should die, I shall never hear the end of it," said Poonah, evidently feeling most uncomfortable.

"Dies! who talks of her dying, you old idiot? Do you suppose because she has cried herself into a fever that that means death? What do you want now? I see you are after something; more money, eh?" questioned De Lorme.

"No, I want nothing. The fact is, I feel queer to hear the little girl talk so about me, unless you hinted something of the sort to her?" asked Poonah with curiosity.

"Hinted what, man?"

"That I promised to get her for you," he whispered, below his breath.

"No, I never did, so help me Heaven."

"Then the spirits have, that is all, for she knows about it, every word," and Poonah peered round the room timidly.

"You superstitious fool, to talk or believe in such absurdities," laughed De Lorme, quite amazed at the man's look of consternation.

"Just don't laugh, unless you care nothing for her, for I tell you she will die; I did not think so before, but I now am certain of it."

"Why, Poonah, you are enough to harrow up the feelings of any one. Who dares say that I care no-

thing for her, when I love her more than ever? But I cannot believe she is so ill as you represent. However, I accept your escort, and will go and see her myself. There, take this; it may be needful to provide for her comfort, but mind don't spend it all at the auberge."

"Better come after dark then, and you shall have a hole to peep through," said Poonah, with a knowing wink, as he coolly pocketed the money, intending with it to drown thought.

Jaques soon returned, with a package of letters and newspapers, which he laid on the table; but for the life of him De Lorme could not break a seal till he had ascertained the exact state of Hena's health. At one moment he fancied her tossing about in bed, moaning forth her grievances against him, in a wild incoherent manner; then again, he saw her laid out, cold and motionless, in the coffin where his villany had put her; nor could he divest himself of these fearful fantasies, till at last he hailed the darkness with delight, and issued forth, in the vain hope of assuaging his fears as to the precarious state of this girl whom he was so bound up in.

Poonah was on the look-out, perhaps the worse for too frequent libations, although not sufficiently so to cause him to forget the visit, to be made under cover of the night. He led De Lorme by an out-of-the-way bye-path, which brought them to the part of the house Hena occupied. A hole had been made

in the cloth, which lined her small apartment to keep out prying eyes, from the spaces between the bamboos. From this position De Lorme could discern Hena, but oh, so changed as to be scarcely recognizable,—her hair all matted, her face so emaciated as to render her eyes unnaturally large and glaring. Her thin arms were thrown over her head, and she was talking wildly and incessantly. Suddenly she made an effort to get out of bed, when an outstretched arm put her back gently, presenting at the same time Matoha's concerned, sorrow-stricken face to view.

"What is he doing there?" savagely hissed De Lorme into Poonah's ear.

"Who? Matoha? Why, they could not do without him; it needs a man's hand, she is so strong through the fever. He handles her as if she was an infant, and he a woman, so tenderly, poor fellow; besides which, as she recognizes no one, it can matter little who nurses her, man or woman."

De Lorme felt irritated. The mere sight of Matoha seemed to have cooled his sorrow, yet had he to appear satisfied, knowing well that on this subject none present would consult him. Still, he felt far from content at the prospect before him; he turned away impatiently and slowly regained his cottage, where his letters lay unnoticed, almost forgotten indeed,—an occurrence which at another time would have interested him so deeply.

Had Mr. Seymour been at home, he would have been sought by poor Matoa, who ever since Hena's illness had made daily inquiries about him ; but he was absent,—had started, indeed, the very day she was attacked, on a visit to the Lake Vaihuria, with Mr. Fenton and Mary, whom all Mr. Seymour's cautioning and counselling could not deter from undertaking the trip, so desirous had she always been to make the tour of the island, any part of which displayed far more beautiful scenery and fertility than Papeete or its environs, especially the districts of Tanteera and Tiapata, situate on the other side of the isthmus, where not a speck of the high mountains could be seen through thickly-wooded and splendid trees running up to the very summit, so fertile is the soil. The former district is also celebrated for their dancers, who are decidedly the best trained in the island.

The morning the party started for "the Lake", proved most propitious, the sun just peeping out, through a slight mist, whilst the trees glistened again with the night's refreshing dew, large drops of moisture hanging from the leaves and sparkling like so many diamonds, as the rays of the rising sun burst forth in all its splendour and heat, the earth sufficiently humid to render riding agreeable. As Mary, fresh and joyous as any young lark, whipped her horse into a fresh canter, challenging Mr. Seymour to follow her, he did so, leaving his friend

Mr. Dubois (who was also of their party) to follow more leisurely with Mr. Fenton. The exuberance of Mary's spirits knew no control; she bounded off in all directions, perfectly heedless of Mr. Seymour's advice to the contrary.

"I have made up my mind not to pay the slightest attention to anything that may tend to mar my pleasure, Mr. Dubious. Oh, you may smile, I have not forgotten that appropriate name; never fear, you will hear it often enough in this trip of ours. Is it not a delicious morning,—quite sufficient to soften the heart of even such an unbeliever as yourself?" she cried gaily.

"I an unbeliever, Miss Mary?"

"Yes, assuredly, in one's power of endurance. Now you are going to see how intensely I shall enjoy this much-talked-of and so long-delayed journey. I am so glad now that it was put off till the weather cooled and became more settled, although I felt vexed enough at the time. As to fatigue, perish the idea!" And once more her horse pranced off, in accordance with her buoyant mood.

The road to Panania is varied, and in some parts the scenery is lovely, as viewed from an elevation; the valley beneath, extending in a point towards the sea, densely wooded with the not unpicturesque bamboo-houses, dotted about; the ground rather marshy, and consequently cultivated in large patches of taro, the long graceful leaves of which, waving to

and fro in the gentle breeze, added to the charm of the scene.

"Tahiti is a beautiful island after all, is it not, Mr. Seymour? I know you English people think there is no country to be compared to your own, but you must surely allow that you have no scenery to be compared to this, have you now?" inquired Mary enthusiastically.

"England has neither a tropical clime nor its attendant fertility to boast of, Miss Mary; nevertheless, when you visit there I only hope I may be present, to hear your outbursts of admiration, such as you could never give utterance to here," replied Mr. Seymour.

"Don't be so positive; I can fancy myself quite as enthusiastic with what I have left behind, when far from the spot I love so well. Is that not the case? From a distance everything appears *couleur de rose*. No, no, Mr. Seymour, although I can well comprehend the splendour of your works of art, which, as you may suppose, I long to see, yet to me, nothing can compare with the sublimity of nature, seen here in all its glory. Do you know these islands often recall to my mind passages of the Bible, where sweet spices and odorous woods are so frequently mentioned. What can surpass our sandal or delicious exotics? Nature has done as much for the natives here as it did for the Israelites in their Jordan; and it does seem hard for us strangers to

come among them and force down their throats, the absolute necessity of their adopting our ideas, instead of leaving them to the enjoyment of their own simpler ones. Just reverse the order of things, and suppose them insisting on *our* leading the indolent lives they do, we should consider such a thing unjust and impossible. Then why should they not do the same by us, when we tell them they must dress, eat, drink, and sleep as we do?" said Mary.

"Why, Miss Mary, I had no idea you were a partisan of the native tribes."

"And why should I not be? Born among them, I can distinguish their many superior traits, and pardon their foibles, as emanating from ignorance rather than vice. What crimes are committed here? None. And what crimes are there not committed in more civilized countries? why, the foreign journals teem with them."

Nor was Mary *hors du principe* in thus expressing herself. It is quite necessary to reside for some time among the natives to understand and appreciate their simplicity of character and genuine good-nature, which a transient stay could not effect; thus the repeatedly ill-judged remarks of mere strangers, who derive their information from a superficial view of matters and things. A large meed of praise has, however, always been extended to the local beauty of the island, and very deservedly so; for what can surpass mountains of a variety of peculiar shapes, beau-

tifully wooded, rivers intersecting the entire island, whilst every road and bye-path can boast of its groves of cocoa-nut, breadfruit, orange, and a long list of others indigenous to the tropics, and unsurpassed for beauty of foliage; queen among all being the breadfruit, with its large beautifully-traced leaf of a deep green, contrasting so well with the long floating banana of a lighter hue, and the graceful palm wafting in the air like so many silken shreds, their towering trunks ever bending seaward? As to the odorous blossoms, their name is indeed legion,—every tree can boast of such, as well as numberless shrubs; for instance, the trumpet-lily, rhododendrons, both white and red, and the Cape jessamine, grow to an immense height compared to what they do in less luxuriant soil. The temperature of the mountains is so much cooler than the valleys, that doubtless any European fruit could there be cultivated, such as the apricot, peaches, nectarines, etc.; but, unfortunately, the settlers only too soon fall into the indolent habits of the native-born, and make but little attempt at progress, content to plant their few vegetables from time to time, and be satisfied with the result, be it little or much.

The natives, on the other hand, care nothing for foreign food compared to the spontaneous productions of their own soil, which demands neither outlay, trouble, nor time, beyond, in some instances, sticking the plants roughly into the ground, and leaving

nature to take its course, as is done with the taro, yam, and sweet potato, which invariably grow to perfection. For the rest, they walk to the valleys or mountains and pluck what they need, which they suspend in rich bunches to the ends of a long pole, carried over their shoulders,—in many instances a weighty morsel, as their bent frames indicate.

Panania was reached, and a hearty breakfast partaken of on the smooth green lawn under the shade of a friendly tree. After reposing for an hour or two, an opportunity totally neglected by Mary, who was altogether too much excited to rest, surrounded as she was by a posse of young natives, gaily weaving wreaths for her especial benefit. Soon the prettiest and most fragrant was placed on her own bright head, whilst the others were distributed among the gentlemen; but at length she wearied to be off.

"Come, you lazy fellows, rise; I long to be mounted again," she cried, aiding her father to his feet by taking his outstretched arm.

"Remember you have a long ride yet before you, Miss Mary," said Mr. Seymour from his mat, without stirring himself.

"That is the very reason we ought to be *en route*, you silly man."

"Were I your father, I would insist on your taking a nap first."

"Fortunately for me you are not; and when I need advice, Papa is here to give it. Were I to en-

deavour to please all my wise Mentors, I might end in a failure as regards myself, which I have no idea of doing.—*n'est-ce pas*, M. Dubois?"

"Mademoiselle is always correct; when pleasure falls in one's path, avail oneself of it, is entirely my maxim; still, a little *ménagement* is always well,—it adds to the enjoyment rather than lessens its charm. For instance, if Mademoiselle, through over-fatigue and excitement, should get a headache?"

"Oh! for pity's sake, Mr. Dubois, let us have none of your prognostications. Why, I actually believe you are in league with Mr. 'Dubious.'"

"Pardon; what did Mademoiselle please to say?"

Mary repeated the words for his benefit, but his comprehension still seemed dull. "I can't say it plainer, can I?" said Mary, fairly nonplussed.

"Perhaps it might help the matter by introducing this Mr. Dubious to our friend," replied Mr. Seymour, gravely struggling with a smile at Mary's joyous laugh at this necessity of explaining her witticism.

"What a capital joke! he must have considered Mr. Dubious meant himself; no wonder he could not understand me. I call this the best piece of fun of all, Mr. Seymour. Do, please, explain the mystery for me; won't you?" begged Mary.

Mr. Dubois laughed heartily at the solution, supposing such a thing necessary, and being altogether too polite to be behindhand in anything, although in reality he was far from appreciating its wit.

"And now, gentlemen, let me inform you both, that for the purpose of shutting out all future disagreeable advice, I intend procuring some cotton wool, and on each occasion shall stop up my ears. There, now!" said Mary.

"Do not take the trouble on my account, Miss Mary; I promise to bore you no further," replied Mr. Seymour.

"*A la bonne heure,*" laughed Mary.

Once more *en route*, and the pretty village of Panania was soon lost to view. The Broom Road (called thus in consequence of the early missionaries obliging the natives to sweep it daily) extends all round the island, although in some places quitted for the sandy beach, to avoid ruts, and an occasional trunk of a tree, laid low by the hand of man or the elements. The river and streams intersect it in numberless places likewise, where a few logs are thrown across, boasting of the name of bridges. Picturesque they may be,—safe, certainly not. The rivers are therefore preferred as a means of conveyance to the other side, rather than to risk venturing these rickety structures, simply intended for foot passengers. In many places the branches of the trees meet overhead, forming a natural arcade and desirable protection from the sun's rays, at the same time producing a sombre, wild appearance, whilst the perfect stillness of the scene, unbroken by bird or insect, adds to its grandeur. The bamboo-houses and naked

little urchins relieve and enliven the route, their great black eyes and curly heads peeping out in all directions, the older ones bidding you "Yer honor" (how do you do?) in a joyous tone. In the country, children generally go naked, excepting on Sundays, arising probably from their aquatic propensities, as one and all swim like ducks, taught as they are from babyhood by their mothers, who throw them into the sea, and let them struggle out as best they can, which they invariably contrive to do safely enough after a few efforts. They seem to thrive in the water, in which they pass most of their time. The cave of Macaa is the one point of interest between Panocaa and Papeia, the depth of which is very great, and the water as cool and clear as crystal. The arched roof seems to be chosen by a certain sparrow for their nests, a strange place certainly to select, as the vapour keeps dripping down in regular streams from nearly all parts, resembling a shower of pearls as nearly as any liquid could. Throwing a stone as far as possible, it still seems to fall at the feet, so profound is this cave, the largest in the island. Papara was reached at four o'clock. When Mary was lifted to the ground, she could scarcely stand; her limbs trembled to such a degree, which she was too proud to avow, but which Mr. Seymour quickly perceived. He took her arm through his, and without a word walked her up and down the lawn briskly, which set her all right again, and caused her to at least look her thanks.

Dinner was ordered, and partaken of with relish, even by Mary, whom a bath in the neighbouring river had quite refreshed. The native repast was scorned by none present; a sharpened appetite effects so much, that even Mr. Seymour, never before an admirer of native food, pronounced everything delicious.

"Papa, what say you to going out fishing to-night? I should like it above all things," said Mary.

"Well, my dear, it is not a thing impossible; the trip has been made for your benefit and pleasure; only enjoy yourself, that is all I ask," replied the indulgent father.

"Oh that the world was peopled by such as you!" cried Mary, with a glance at Mr. Seymour, as she threw her arms about her father's neck lovingly, laying her face in her own coaxing way beside his.

A boat was therefore engaged and manned, when they started for the reefs, where many there before them formed quite a picturesque scene in the dark night; the men walking the sharp coral reefs, bare-footed, torch in hand, spearing the fish, as they are attracted to the surface by the light, the women sitting silently in the canoes, keeping them steady till freighted. The natives are very expert with the spear, filling their boats or canoes in a shorter space of time than a large net could effect.

Mary was delighted. Their boatmen had likewise speared many, and she returned to shore in perfect

glee, determined to have some cooked at once for tea, she herself inspecting the operation.

Mademoiselle is quite a traveller; she does not in the least appear fatigued from the day's long ride," remarked Mr. Dubois.

"Not a bit, I feel as fresh as I did at starting. Another cup of tea, Mr. Dubious?" said Mary, pointedly emphasizing the name.

"No, I thank you, I have no desire to remain awake all night," replied Mr. Seymour.

"Does tea have this effect on you?" she inquired.

"Not properly-made tea. This is the essence of it, I should say."

"Do you? I detest weak watery stuff, a kind of homœopathic decoction, of the same which I shall make for your especial use to-morrow morning. When I take tea I like it strong," and she helped herself to another cup, more out of bravado than real necessity.

"Now, Mary, you had better go to bed, so as to be up early in the morning; remember, we start at four precisely," said her father.

"Are you going to bed now, Papa? You will smoke a cigar first I know, so I shall keep you company till then, not feeling in the least sleepy."

"I should say not, Miss Mary, after two such cups of tea as you have drunk. I only hope they will let you have some little rest, to enable you to continue the journey to-morrow," ventured Mr. Seymour.

"Rest assured it won't be me who will prevent it," and the laughing girl put her fingers in her ears as a sign she would hear no more.

Mary had occasion, during the night, to regret her obstinacy. No matter what position she took, sleep came not; over and over again she repeated her prayers, in the hopes it would produce drowsiness, which it did not. She at last tossed and wearied herself into a headache, the first she had ever had, which was not decreased by the conviction that all her boasted powers would come to nought, and that she would be unable to continue the trip, as arranged the previous evening. When she thought of Mr. Seymour, and the nickname she had so gloried in giving, she covered her face, and wept tears of real regret, and more in sorrow than in anger.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRIP TO LAKE VAILURIA.

WHEN Mr. Fenton called to awake her, he found her unable to rise.

“Never mind, Mary, my pet, we will pass the day here, so try and sleep off your headache before the afternoon;” with this advice he kissed, and left her.

Mr. Dubois was most profuse in his regrets at Mademoiselle’s indisposition, which he trusted would prove but temporary, whilst Mr. Seymour could scarcely refrain from laughing, and wondered how Mary was going to appear and act next.

After breakfast, the three gentlemen started for a walk; it was slightly overcast, therefore the more agreeable. They proceeded leisurely, admiring the beautiful scenery, and many points of interest to the cultivator; every patch of sugar-cane, coffee, or cotton being seized upon by Mr. Fenton (whose heart and soul were bent on the prosperity of the island) and

advanced as an example of the richness of the soil, and evidence of what the island could produce, with the slightest amount of labour or outlay.*

In the course of their ramble, Mr. Seymour decided on returning to the *chiefess* for towels, as he intended plunging into one of the rivers, *en route*; he accordingly retraced his steps alone, and found Mary lying on a sofa, crying bitterly.

"Why, Miss Mary, what is the matter; can I serve you in any way?" he inquired, in a kind voice.

"I feel so utterly miserable," she sobbed, and she really looked her words.

"Does your head ache so badly?" and he laid his cool hand on her burning brow.

* Since writing the above, it may be necessary to add, for the benefit of those inclined to visit the Queen of the Pacific, that Tahiti has at length taken quite a start in the plantation line, owing to the encouragement and desire of the Government to see the island thoroughly cultivated. An English company now possess an extensive cotton plantation at Ati-maono-Papara, called *Terre Eugénie*, which is conducted by a gentleman of superior ability, who, in the shortest space of time, has converted a wilderness of trees and shrubs into a finished plantation, which would do credit to any country, and will, no doubt, eventually prove an immense fortune to those interested in it, as an impetus was alone needed to set others working the island. It begins to present an appearance which it should have done years ago; and Mr. Fenton's idea of its natural resources is likely to be realized sooner than he could have supposed possible, all sanguine though he might have been.

"Yes, dreadfully. Oh, Mr. Seymour, I wish I had never come, and had taken your advice and remained at home. I would give anything to be with Mamma this minute, she would never have left me alone as Papa has done. Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?" she cried, with a fresh burst of tears. A smile stole over Mr. Seymour's features. Mary's present bewailings and position realized so exactly his prognostications, but she was too forlorn to be taken advantage of; teasing now would indeed have been cruel.

"Crying will never better the case," said Mr. Seymour, "so calm yourself, and I promise to remain with you till your father returns, if you have no objection, Miss Mary?"

"Thank you; but oh, Mr. Seymour, please don't call me Miss Mary any more."

"What then, you incomprehensible child?"

"I don't care to be treated as I imagined I should; please don't laugh at me, Mr. Seymour, for I feel so very unhappy, indeed I do," she moaned.

"Poor home-sick girl, try and go to sleep," suggested Mr. Seymour.

"I wish I could; I have tried so hard, but that tea kept me awake; I am so very sorry I took it, Mr. Seymour," she said humbly, her pride and independence all gone, and she looked up pitifully in his face through her tears, appealing as it were for forgiveness, in such a perfectly childish way, that Mr. Seymour could not resist stooping down, and pressing his lips

tenderly to her broad white forehead. There was nothing offensive in the action, yet it called the hot blood to her before pale cheek and she shut her eyes quickly so as to hide its effect. From that moment she became in feelings what she had so longed to appear, a woman.

“Regrets, unfortunately, cannot remedy the matter, therefore better not think of it; and now, not another word, remember,” and he put his finger to his lip, whilst he looked steadily into her eyes, and kept gently smoothing down her hair, till gradually the heavy lids drooped, and her regular breathing proved she slept. Mr. Seymour continued for awhile to sit beside her, examining attentively the perfect contour, of her sweet face, and wondering what the future had in store for this fair young girl. At the moment, he would have asked nothing better than to have had the forming of such a petulant, sensitive disposition. What a world of excitement would there not be, in moulding it to suit his views of what a woman should be! he rather liked opposition for the pleasure of mastering it, as it were. Calling a young native girl to him, he bade her bring a towel and some water, (which he enveloped Mary’s head in,) requesting her to sit and keep away the mosquitoes till his return, and, above all, not to disturb the sick girl. His quiet way of commanding seemed to compel obedience, for the young half-savage submitted to the rather wearisome task without a murmur.

When Mr. Fenton perceived Mr. Seymour approaching, he cried out all in a breath, "Where in the name of wonders have you been? What kept you? Did you think of inquiring about Mary?"

"I will commence by replying to your last question, which may possibly explain the rest," replied Mr. Seymour smilingly. He then told them how he had found poor Mary, and what he had done before he left her.

"How stupidly I have acted! poor child," said Mr. Fenton, "she must indeed have felt lonely and miserable to have recourse to tears, for Mary is not at all addicted that way, I assure you. Pray excuse me, I will return to the house in case she wakes and finds me absent again."

"There is no occasion, believe me, and the quieter she is kept the better. I will guarantee her a sweet repose for several hours to come," urged Mr. Seymour.

"Upon my word, Seymour, I am really indebted to you, my poor little pet being lonesome. I had no idea she was really ill, and fancied it was want of sleep through over-fatigue, which after a good nap would set her all right again."

"And so it will, I hope; being an occasional sufferer myself from headache, I believe I know the best soothers in such cases."

Nor was Mr. Seymour mistaken. When they did return Mary was found in the very same position,

the little girl beside her fanning off the mosquitoes. She looked up into Mr. Seymour's face with her great black eyes, and received her meed of praise in the shape of a bright coin, which she clutched and darted off with, without a word.

When Mary at length opened her eyes, they wandered round the room inquiringly, and then encountered her father and Mr. Dubois sound asleep on mats, and Mr. Seymour resting in a large fauteuil. He arose and softly approached her.

"Is the headache better?"

"Quite gone, and I have to thank you for its cure."

"How so?"

"You willed me to sleep, and I did so, I believe."

"Not a very difficult task, considering you were overpowered at the time, my little friend."

"Is it too late to start for the lake now, Mr. Seymour," inquired Mary anxiously.

"You are undoubtedly the best judge of what can conduce to your pleasure, as well as your powers of endurance; surely Mr. Dubois is incapable of advising Miss Incredulous on such a subject." Mr. Seymour intended to have Mary laugh at this speech, instead of which it had the contrary effect; although her father had assented, she was not inclined to play the baby.

"Have a care, Mary, or the headache will return."

"It will be your fault, then; you were so kind this

morning, saying nothing disagreeable, that I thought you had forgiven me," she sobbed.

"I have yet to learn in what you have offended, Mary."

"In many ways, which I would like to have spoken to you about long ago, but I felt ashamed."

"You are totally absolved from all imaginary peccadilloes from this moment, lady fair," he replied gaily.

"And you will never call me Miss anything again, or hesitate to give me advice, which I promise to receive in the spirit it is intended?" she asked blushing.

"In a word, Mary, you desire a truce to what is past, and a fresh compact for the future; wherein I am to act elder brother to a sweet little confiding sister,—is it so?"

Mary knew to what he alluded, and would have given much to have evaded a direct reply; but the thought of his kindness that morning, when she felt so utterly forsaken, and the kiss he had bestowed on her (which seemed to have given suddenly birth to a nearer tie), decided the question, and she slipped her little hand into his in acquiescence, and once more felt the pressure of his lips; this time she looked up almost inquiringly with a strange startled air.

"I was but putting the seal to our compact, Mary," he said, laughing; "henceforth you shall find your confidence is not misplaced; and now for my

first brotherly counsel. You had better rest this afternoon, and start for the lake at early dawn ; shall it be so ?”

“ Oh yes, I am sure you are right ; it would be imprudent to do so now.” What more she might have said was forestalled by her father’s voice.

“ Ah, my darling, you look as bright as a penny,” and he raised himself, with difficulty, from his recumbent position, much to Mary’s amusement.

“ How do you enjoy lying on mats, Papa ?”

“ I believe I am getting past that nowadays. Ah ! you laugh ; better that than cry, Mary, eh ?”

She looked reproachfully at Mr. Seymour, as she laid her head on her father’s shoulder, and whispered how unwell she had been.

“ We are all right again now, I perceive, and hungry enough I dare say, so you had better go and tidy your hair before dinner ; it looks a regular mop at present.”

“ Oh, Papa, how unpoetical you are. Why could you not say, ‘ my golden locks were dishevelled ’ ?”

“ You will do ; there, now be off, I begin to feel rather appetitish myself.”

At peep of day they started, and safely reached the lake ; after passing seventy odd times the same river, till the summit of the mountain was reached, where, imbedded within its bosom, lies this beautiful sheet of clear water, surrounded by forests of firs and splendid ferns, which well repay the venturesome visitor, his

ascent up the narrow mountain-path, with its interminable windings. Rafts of the trunks of the firs are used to cross the lake Vailuria, in the waters of which exists a species of eel, supposed to be endowed with a charmed life, which nothing can destroy but a blow from the stem of the Ti plant, held by the native tribes generally as sacred ; to the goddess of which they on certain occasions pray, holding at the same time a branch of the leaves, which are of a deep green and very long. Should their petition have been heard and granted, the leaves will shake visibly, without effort, when their undertaking is certain to result favourably. For example, in time of war, holding a bunch of these sacred leaves, rendered so at the moment by the presence of the spirit, a leap might be taken from the highest mountain without the slightest injury to the hardy individual, which, under other circumstances, must have proved fatal ; it seems incomprehensible, yet perfectly credited by the natives.

The root of the Ti plant, when baked, is deliciously sweet, possessing as it does an immense quantity of saccharine matter (much more so indeed than the sugar-cane), which distilled produces an excellent quality of spirit.

Formerly, extra-large ovens were made for the purpose of baking it in, filled with huge logs, brushwood, and stones, set on fire, and left to consume till the latter became red-hot. At this stage, the native

priest steps forward, armed with a bunch of leaves, which he strikes on the side of the pit, after mumbling a prayer; he then walks boldly over the burning stones, followed by all who desire to do the feat, unharmed by the raging elements,—in fact, perfectly invulnerable to the advancing flame, although spectators at some distance from the mouth of the oven would be scorched by its fearful intensity.

For many years the custom has been abandoned at Tahiti. Not so, however, at the leeward groups, where yearly the ceremony takes place, with unvarying effect.

A European gentleman, residing temporarily at Huaheine, determined on proving to himself and others the impossibility of the prayer causing the extraordinary phenomenon; consequently, imitating the priest in all but the orison, he likewise passed through without experiencing the slightest inconvenience from the heat, although the flames were actually playing round his bare feet and legs. The oven he walked across was no less than seventy-two feet in circumference, and his opinion is, that the Ti plant possesses properties which destroy the effect of heat, as the moment he struck the pit with his branch, it was at once shivered into perfect shreds, when the flames, previously raging high, abated considerably.

Nothing can divest from the mind of the natives, the existence of good and evil spirits, which, in their opinion, take different forms. They assert and believe,

that previous to a war the dead arose likewise and paced the earth ; on the subject of which they relate the most miraculous stories.

“Is it not sublime, Mademoiselle?” asked Mr. Dubois ; and he forthwith sang, in an enthusiastic way, Lamartine’s ‘Lai,’ which seemed almost adapted for the spot in its *triste grandeur*.

“Yes, it is magnificent ; but such works of nature always depress me. I can but feel awed as I contemplate, whereas you and others give vent to your appreciation in words, or song for instance,” said Mary simply.

“I call yours true genius, Mary ; your sentiments beam in your face, which is truly refreshing, after one has been satiated by an over-quantum of sight-seeing,” said Mr. Seymour, who had been watching her quiet raptures.

“Is it possible, Mr. Seymour, that such scenery as this can ever satiate ? I have frequently wondered how one who has evidently travelled so much, and seen so many wonderful and beautiful works of nature, in and out of Europe, could be satisfied to pass any length of time in our certainly pretty, yet monotonous little island. Now I can almost divine that the change might be agreeable to you, after all.”

“Just so, Mary, I have roamed, seen, and enjoyed enough to thoroughly appreciate the picturesque quietude of Tahiti. I have likewise mixed sufficiently in society and its worldly vanities, to experience

an innate enjoyment in studying the character of the simple unsophisticated denizens of these isles. After having passed a few weeks most pleasantly and lazily, the very fact of my liberty of action makes me indifferent as to how long I may still remain ; whereas I can well understand how irksome it must prove to those compelled to remain for a specified term."

"As is my case," sighed Mr. Dubois. "This island may be very beautiful, and possess an unexceptionable climate, but it is too far from *la belle France* to suit my views. As a place of residence, I should always prefer a location where art diversified by the beauties of nature may be found—anywhere in Europe, *par exemple*."

"I have heard many say the same, before now ; yet, when they could have gratified the desire, preferred returning to these islands to end their days," remarked Mr. Fenton.

"You must give me the chance of judging for myself, one of these days, Papa dear,—won't you?" asked Mary in a coaxing tone.

"Yes, my love, such has always been my intention."

"Then, Mr. Seymour, you must remain in Tahiti till we go ; and perhaps Mr. Dubois, by that time, will be able to form one of our party. What a delightful time we shall have !" cried Mary enthusiastically.

"You will not suffer from sea-sickness, of course?" suggested Mr. Seymour.

"And if I do, you will take care of me, as you did yesterday."

"It is a bargain, Mary ; where I cannot cure, I can at least relieve by good nursing,—not a disagreeable task when a pretty young girl is concerned in it."

"And if I were old and ugly?"

"That might alter the matter considerably,—as far as pleasure was concerned, particularly," laughed Mr. Seymour.

"*Prenez garde, Mademoiselle*, M. Seymour will make you ill, for the sake of attending his amiable patient, *n'est-ce pas, mon cher*?" said Mr. Dubois.

"Thank you for the hint, Dubois, it won't be lost on me."

"You are chatting very pleasantly, no doubt, my friends, but let me suggest a move as soon as we have partaken of something invigorating," remarked Mr. Fenton, smacking his lips.

Mary fell entirely to Mr. Seymour's care during the rest of the journey homeward, and was thereby saved much fatigue, following implicitly his advice, which was offered in a way to avoid offending, yet it inevitably lengthened their absence from home by several days, much to Mr. Fenton's regret.

"Poor Mamma, she will miss us very much. I wish she had thought of inviting Fanny Wells to stay with her, for company's sake," said Mary.

"I doubt whether Mrs. Fenton would be of your opinion, Mary," remarked Mr. Seymour.

"Indeed she would. Mamma has a great sympathy for poor Fanny; and so would you, Mr. Seymour, if you knew how badly she is treated at home,—for ever being scolded, and boxed about, for no reason whatever."

"How can you be sure of the latter clause, Mary?"

"By what Fanny tells me; but you must scarcely approve, Mr. Seymour, of a girl of Fanny's age being beaten, under any circumstances. Would you?"

"I certainly approve of very young girls being checked when they deserve it. There are many ways of punishing, however, without having recourse to blows, Mary."

"You must think I deserve it often enough, then."

"No, I can't say I do,—reasoned with occasionally, perhaps. Your faults are of a harmless kind, I fancy."

"And why are not poor Fanny's?"

"They may be, for aught I know, and, I might add, care. I dislike the mother, and fancy the daughter a dull, insipid girl."

"She is not very bright, certainly; but I attribute that to her mother's system of nagging and fault-finding, which renders Fanny timid and silent, from necessity. A look from her mother makes her tremble; yet, when she occasionally spends the day out, you hear Mrs. Wells lamenting her absence in the most touching terms.—'When Fanny is out, I am perfectly miserable; it seems to me as if I had

lost something near and dear. She reminds me so of her poor father—may his soul rest in peace!”—She says this, the hypocrite, when every one knows she worried him into the grave; and so she will Fanny, if she don’t look out.”

“Young ladies are not so frail; Miss Faunny is good for many a rebuff yet,” laughed Mr. Seymour.

“How can you be so hard-hearted, Mr. Seymour? But have you seen Hena, lately? Just before we left, I heard she was very sick, and forgot to ask Mamma to send and inquire about her,” said Mary.

“Indeed! I was not aware she was ill, although the last time I saw her she was looking far from well.”

“Mrs. Wells is for ever insinuating things against her to Mamma. She says Mr. De Lorme is a lover of hers.”

“Mary, Mary, I feel shocked to hear you speak of such things; really, you ought to be more careful how you repeat what you hear. As to Hena, the very best thing she can do is to marry that young chief Matoha, which will effectually protect her from scandal, which a young girl, situated as she is, can scarcely expect to escape from, being both pretty and friendless; her modest demeanour would go for nothing with such wicked tongues as those you cite.”

“Marry Matoha! why he is a pure native, Mr. Seymour, and Hena as fair as many a European brunette. You will rarely find a half-caste who would consent to wed a native; and for my part, I should be sorry to

see Hena do so, and hope she may yet meet with some one more worthy of her."

"Amen!" said Mr. Seymour, much amused at Mary's notion of Hena's worth, and future prospects of happiness.

"You are a strange man, Mr. Seymour. I wish I knew what you really do think about some things," said Mary after a pause.

"What, am I puzzling your little brain, my child? yet it seems to me I am very readable, very matter-of-fact."

"Are you? Then how is it I can never find out your real opinion about the native women, which others of your sex go into such panegyrics about?"

"Do they, indeed? Then you may rest assured that I never shall."

"Do you not admire them?"

"Scarcely; I have seen some passable ones, but nothing to rave about."

Mary soon perceived, by his laconic answers, that it was a subject he disliked conversing upon, therefore abandoned it, and paid more heed to the road, which was becoming of more interest as they proceeded,—several small cascades rippling down the rocky mountains, which are literally covered with broad-leaved trees and aquatic plants, flowering vines, bending gracefully from branch to branch, their many tendrils hanging gracefully in the mid-air, and swaying to and fro like so many flowery swings,

ready, as it were, to receive the lithe forms of the forest elves,—hemmed in by a background of mountain peaks of varied forms, each one presenting fresh beauties to the awe-struck gazer. Some of the mountain passes proved difficult of descent, and poor Mary's heart quaked at what she was expected to do. Several times she had to dismount, and allow herself to be guided down the slippery rocks by Mr. Seymour, scarcely venturing the while to look down on the valleys below,—those beautiful vales, serene in their native loveliness, untrodden by man or beast, scarcely a bird venturing down the giddy height, unless to secrete their young amidst the shadowy glades, which even the sun's rays very rarely penetrated.

Point Venus was at length reached, perhaps to the satisfaction of most of the party. Starting on a pleasure trip excursion is decidedly agreeable; but how much more so is the return!—such were Mary's sentiments on the present occasion. They had a refreshing bath, and, after a short repose, visited the spot where poor Cook had planted a tamarind-tree, amidst a mere wild waste, now a very pretty village, boasting of a handsome church and school-house, etc.

Mary plucked a few leaves of the majestic tree, in memory of the unfortunate traveller, ere they left the spot.

The hill between Point Venus and Tara commands a splendid view of the surrounding country,

from whence Mary quickly selected their pretty house, imbedded in foliage, from all others: the ready tears sprang to her eyes at the sight.

"You are delighted to get home, Mary," said Mr. Seymour, perceiving her emotion.

"Oh yes. I am so anxious to see Mamma; I don't think I could ever be tempted to leave her again."

"Ever is a long time, Mary; one of these odd days you will express very different sentiments, I fancy."

"All in good time," said her father, looking tenderly at her expressive face,—the large tears hanging like dew-drops from her fringed lashes, called there by a feeling of filial love. What more pure and holy?

She raised her beautiful eyes, and detected his earnest gaze, and feared he might read amiss her agitation.

"I have enjoyed myself very much, Papa dear. Never can I forget the lake, or the beautiful scenery we have all so much admired; even the bad roads were picturesque, although I passed them with fear and trembling; yet I must confess I am glad to get back, and be with Mamma once more," she added, with quivering lip and tremulous voice.

"Here we are, then; and if I mistake not, your mother is on the look-out," said Mr. Fenton, raising himself in his stirrups, to distinguish more clearly through the labyrinth of branches.

Mary stopped to hear no more—she whipped her horse, and was on the lawn before any of them ; with one bound she sprang from his back, and found herself locked in her mother's arms, where she could restrain her feelings no longer, so gave way to a shower of tears.

“ What has happened ? ” said Mrs. Fenton to her husband, who had now joined their group, and stood with his arm encircling her shoulders, after a warm embrace.

“ Nothing, love, beyond Mary's delight at again having her head on the best of mothers' bosom. Where shall we go next, Mary ; to Morea ? ” he asked laughingly.

“ Plenty of time to think about that, Papa ; but when we do make another trip, Mamma must surely come, too. I had not half the pleasure without you, dear Mamma, this time ; I knew you must be lonely without us,” said Mary, looking up for a moment, and then nesting her head in its old resting place.

“ Who would not have a daughter ? ” said Mr. Seymour with a sigh.

Mary half raised her head, and threw a timid glance in his direction ; he took off his hat in token of adieu, promising to call on the morrow to inquire after her health. Mr. Dubois also thanked them for the pleasant hours passed in their agreeable society, the *souvenir* of which he would carry back with him to France.

"We are to go together, remember," cried Mary, who had now quite recovered her usually cheerful spirits.

"*J'espère, Mademoiselle*, if you are not too long making up your mind about taking such a voyage," replied Mr. Dubois with a smile.

"Better go to bed early, Mary, so as to husband your strength for the coming event," laughed Mr. Seymour as he rode off, accompanied by Mr. Dubois, leaving the Fenton family to talk over their excursion together.

Mary lingered yet a moment on the lawn to watch them out of sight, when with a deep sigh she in her turn entered the house.

When Mr. Seymour reached his cottage, he found Jaques there awaiting his return with a message from De Lorme, requesting to see him immediately.

"I fancy my master has had bad news, Mr. Seymour, for ever since he received his letters by last mail, he has been in a dreadful state of mind," ventured Jaques.

"Oh, I am sorry to hear that; tell him I shall call as soon as I am dressed."

Whilst hurrying through his toilet, a timid knock came to the door, which, on opening, proved to be none other than Matoha. Mr. Seymour felt somewhat surprised to see him there, never as yet having addressed him; but the poor fellow looked so disconcerted that he at once kindly reassured him by

offering a chair, and talking as if to an old acquaintance.

"You must come and see me another time, my good fellow, as I am rather hurried to-day, having a pressing engagement which I cannot postpone," said Mr. Seymour.

"Oh, do not go till you have heard me first; I have such a great favour to ask you," ventured poor Matoha, with a pleading look.

His tone and manner startled Mr. Seymour, who now perceived how haggard he appeared.

"Well, out with it at once, my man, for I have but a very few moments to spare you this evening."

"It is about Hena I wish to speak."

"Ah! that is well; how is she?"

"Very ill, dying indeed," and the poor fellow buried his face and cried bitterly.

Mr. Seymour was really shocked, and scarcely knew how to comfort his visitor.

"I am truly grieved for you, Matoha."

"For me? and why not for her?" he exclaimed savagely.

"My good fellow, calm yourself."

"Ah! yes, I forgot, fool that I am, that you know nothing as yet," cried Matoha, "how my poor hunted bird, when I reproached her about that De Lorme, confessed the truth to me,—how, from the first moment she saw you, she loved, oh how devotedly, Mr. Seymour, I alone can tell. Never can I forget her

utter hopelessness of expression, when she said I was happier than her, for I at least knew that she entertained a sisterly affection for me, and could see and speak to her when I pleased, whereas she was deprived of all,—alone, left to droop and pine for what was beyond her reach, craving for a kind word or look, but receiving neither. You are a good man, Mr. Seymour, I am sure, and would aid the needy liberally with your purse, yet you have left one I would willingly die to serve, fret her young life away without a single effort to save her. Whilst you have been away enjoying yourself, she has been tossing in wild delirium on a bed of suffering, thrown there by her hopeless love for you. Daily disappointments were too much for her,—she, who submitted to your friend's visits in the expectation of your accompanying him occasionally, which you never did. I knew she loved, by her down, absent mood, and preference to be alone; but I never dreamed it was you who had gained her affections till she told me. She takes after her poor mother, does Hena, in her great loving heart, and both seem doomed to the same fate. Worse still, for her mother knew perfect happiness as long as it lasted, whereas my poor Hena has experienced none. The threats of Mr. De Lorme, with the knowledge of your engagement, has completely crushed her."

"My engagement! Mr. De Lorme's threats! what do you mean?" Up to this time Mr. Seymour had

listened to Matoha's melancholy recital without interruption ; nothing that he advanced surprised him, for he had long suspected Hena's preference, which caused him to shun her as he had done. The concluding words, however, awoke him to a sense of underhand play, which he determined on sifting to the end.

"My engagement ! Mr. De Lorme's threats ! what do you mean ?"

"Taai tells me, he showed her a portrait of a beautiful lady in England, and then tried to make terms with her himself. You will hear all about it, I dare say, but I must not stay here longer. All I implore you to do is to go and see Hena, and judge for yourself of her condition. As she is dying, it can do no harm, and may do good, in rendering her last moments happy, although she will recognize you no more than she does any one else."

"Then why do you desire this visit, Matoha, if that is the case?"

"Your presence might calm her fearful ravings ; it seems to me that hers would mine, were I in her situation," he said with a deep sigh.

"You love her, then, very much, my poor Matoha?" inquired Mr. Seymour kindly.

"I came to speak of her feeling, not mine, Mr. Seymour," he replied with true native dignity.

Such noble unselfishness deeply affected Mr. Seymour, who could not resist saying.

"Well, Matoha, for your sake I will go."

"No, no, say for hers; only let me see her happy, and I ask no more," implored Matoha.

"I only wish there were a few more in the world like you, Matoha; but such instances of self-sacrifice are rare indeed, and I can only display my appreciation of such thoughtfulness by complying with your wishes. If a kind word from me can effect a change in Hena's state, you may still hope for better days, Matoha."

The young chief shook his head sadly as he glided away with rapid strides, fearing he had already wasted too much time from the girl's side.

For a few seconds Mr. Seymour remained lost in thought, when, recollecting his promise, he too hurried off to De Lorme's cottage, somewhat *malgré lui*, as he could not but feel disgusted at his conduct in trumping up this story of an engagement, no doubt to further his own ill-judged ends. He was determined to force a clear explanation from De Lorme, as he felt convinced his state of mind proceeded rather from sorrow and regret at Hena's state, than ill news from France, as Jaques supposed.

He found De Lorme certainly very much altered for the worse; his neglected appearance denoted more than anything else an unhappy state of mind. When he saw Mr. Seymour enter he covered his face, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Why, De Lorme! I am truly sorry to see you

thus unmanned," said Mr. Seymour sympathizingly. "I trust you have not lost any one dear to you."

"Oh, Seymour, without exaggeration you see before you the most miserable man living," he replied in a deeply agitated voice, "and regret that I did not accept your friendly advice instead of rejecting it. When too late I see my error, and can only curse my blind wilfulness; but, alas! I loved that unfortunate girl as I have never before loved. Night and day since first we met have my thoughts been absorbed in her. Willingly would I have sacrificed father, mother, everything I held most dear, to obtain her love; while, like a conceited idiot, I flattered myself I could win her; that once possessing her person her affection would soon follow, as such burning passion as mine could not but in time exact a return. I knew not then the dangerous ground I was treading in thus conniving against her peace of mind. O God! what has her providential illness not saved me from, base wretch as I was and am! How much worse might I not have become!" and again he wept bitterly. Mr. Seymour was a thorough Englishman, who considered there were but few circumstances in which a man might shed tears without disgracing his manhood; and this certainly did not appear like one of them. Still, it is ever sad to witness such outbursts, be it in man or woman; so he could not but look commiseratingly on the unhappy individual before him, much as he condemned

his conduct from first to last. Engaged to his cousin, he had no business to fall in love with Hena; having done so, he was still more blameable in thus having persecuted her to death. It was a fearful deed to answer for, but one, he trusted, which might be avoided. He was no believer in broken hearts, therefore considered good care in nursing would carry Hena through all danger. He was on the point of so expressing himself when De Lorme placed in his hand an open letter from his father.

“Read it, Seymour, and judge what my feelings must now be.”

The portion most interesting to the reader ran as follows :—

“I do not regret, Adolphe, your having formed an unfavourable opinion of the beauty of the Tahitian women, as you must not forget that you owe allegiance to a fair and gentle girl, wholly and solely devoted to her cousin. Marie is well, and as happy as the prospect of a long separation can render her. She deutes me to express to you all I think proper, and has likewise coaxed me (dear child) into enclosing a pressed flower, which, I doubt not, touched her lips ere being consigned to my care. So much for your *fiancée*, Adolphe.

“With regard to Tahiti, I can scarcely conceive the people degenerating to the extent you describe. I found them during my *séjour* far from *affreux*, and have frequently looked back with regret to the many

happy days passed amidst the simple, hospitable inhabitants in the most picturesque isle the eye ever dwelt upon, which left an impression in my mind never to be effaced.

“Adolphe, I had always intended to strictly guard within my own breast a secret of my younger days; but somehow, since receiving your first letter, dated Papeete, old memories have revived, and an impulse I have vainly endeavoured to resist induces me to have recourse to your personal aid in obtaining some intelligence of a little girl whom I have long since lost sight of,—the fault of circumstances rather than my own will. This is her story:—

“Some fifteen years since I was stationed at Papeete, when I became enamoured of a young native girl of great personal attractions; she was a mere child in years, yet many of my brother-officers courted her also. Happily for me, I was the one preferred, when she readily abandoned herself to my protection. In the course of the next year she presented me with the sweetest little angel imaginable. It is of this child I wish to learn. If you succeed in tracing her, and find her worthy, please be kind to her for my sake; and as soon as you send me some information I will forward you a few trifles for her use. Up to a certain period I contrived that the mother should receive a remittance for herself and the child's support, when the party I employed notified to me that my poor Nino had never recovered our separation; she

pined from the day we parted, and in the course of a few months was laid in her lowly grave, innocently considering herself my legal wife (as the natives so readily do under like circumstances); nor do I think even that sacred tie could have made me adore her more than I did at the time. Ah! my Adolphe, men are incomprehensible beings; indeed, much as I love and respect your mother, who is the best and most pious of her sex, yet do I look back with a vague regret to the blissful past, and sad conclusion to my Tahitian amour.

“The child, I understand, had been adopted after her poor mother’s death by some native people, since which I ceased to hear of her. All you can do is to inquire for a girl of between thirteen and fourteen called Hena.”

It can scarcely be conceived with what emotions Mr. Seymour perused this letter. Who would not make excuses for a son brought up by such a father? he thought, as he slowly folded it previous to returning it to De Lorme, who looked up in his face, exclaiming, in an agonized tone—

“To think, Seymour, that she is my own little sister after all. Has my father not acted infamously in thus abandoning such a child? I could almost curse him for the barbarous act.”

“Because it happens to affect you in more senses than one, De Lorme. You have always been aware of the fact of Hena’s being the child of a French

officer ; but of what consequence was that to you, so long as you coveted her as your father did her mother years since ? Depend upon it, the entire system is wrong. This cannot be an exceptional case. Rest assured many other young men like yourself have relatives among the islands of whom they are totally ignorant. It is a sad state of things,—one I cannot bear to contemplate, much less dwell upon,—which can only go under the head of ‘heartless infamy,’ to be execrated whenever met.”

“You are perfectly correct,” said De Lorme gloomily. “But, harsh as your expressions may be, they cannot equal my own condemnation. It will prove a sad though useful lesson in my future career, rest assured, Seymour.”

“I trust so, De Lorme,” replied Mr. Seymour in a kind tone. “Out of evil often arises good ; but what is your intention ?—to make yourself known to Hena as her brother ?”

“Most decidedly. All the reparation in my power shall now be made to her, not for my father’s sake, but for her own, poor little neglected wild-flower that she has been ! as if he could not have sent for her long ago. My mother, who always longed for a daughter, would have been delighted to adopt such a girl as Hena ; and I would have been so proud of my little sister, for, with proper advantages, what might not have been made of her in France ? But what am I thinking of, Seymour ? It was not for this only

that I sent to you, to give vent to vain repinings, when I might be serving her more effectually. She is very ill, they do say dying, but I will not believe that," and he shuddered visibly. "She is young, and with proper care will surely win through it. But there lies the doubt; my own folly shuts her door against me, nor can I induce them to receive either money or clothes at my hands. Matoha provides and does everything, which but adds to my despair."

"And why should it? Matoha is the personification of noble unselfishness; his example might be followed without giving rise to a blush."

"For Heaven's sake, Seymour, spare me this shame. There are pills one can never swallow, and this is one of them. I could almost prefer seeing Hena in her grave than wedded to this man," he said gloomily.

"All prejudice, De Lorme."

"Perhaps so, but nevertheless I cannot divest myself of it," he said, in a tone which admitted of no further argument. "And I have yet to lower myself further in your sight, for I have acted underhandedly towards you, Seymour, who tried to be my better genius. You are aware how earnestly I sought Hena's love, to win which I would have stooped to almost anything, but my efforts met with but little success. A civil word or regard was a rare occurrence; each return to her side ought to have convinced me how vain were my endeavours, but, like a

conceited fool, I would not credit my ill-success, attributing to timidity what was real avoidance."

"Taai at length divulged the truth to me : my visits had been alone supported in the hopes of my coming accompanied by you, Seymour ; you, who had scarcely ever addressed her, had won that which I prized above all earthly treasures—her love."

Here De Lorme covered his face, and groaned in agony, whilst even his listener felt rather queer. "Don't think, Seymour, that in alluding to this delicate subject I do so with any ulterior hopes ; far from it. Another time I will tell you what my wishes are with regard to Hena's future. I knew you cared nothing for her."

"Nor for any one else, you might add," interrupted Mr. Seymour pointedly.

"I fancied differently," said De Lorme, with a rising colour. "I had seen the portrait of a beautiful girl in your possession, and I made base use of it in proving to Hena how ill-placed were her affections, your being engaged to the original of the picture I placed in her hand. She seemed so calm after hearing this that I gloried at what I had done, and was led on by her appearance to once more plead my suit, when she repulsed me as she had never before attempted,—said she had despised me from the first, and would never consent to see me again. She looked as she did that day at Matoha, when he reproached her. I had no idea she had so much temper, but her expres-

sions drove me desperate. I retorted; vowed she should be mine, despite all she said; and hinted that my measures were already taken. My threats seemed to stun her. She looked fearfully perplexed, and the expression of her eye I can never forget, so hopeless and yet so wild. That night she was attacked with brain fever. I have now told you all, without reservation, because I know you are honourable, and will never take advantage of the girl's weakness as I might have done in your place. We have been brought up in different schools. Seymour, it is a miserable excuse, but the only available one. And now let me urge you to visit her, and do what you think proper about calling in medical aid. She is attended at present by natives, but their remedies, though good, are fearfully powerful, I understand. Make use of my purse freely, Seymour, and I conjure you treat her with gentleness until she is stronger. As soon as she is convalescent I will consult you about her removal."

"I have listened to you attentively, De Lorme, and what I am about doing was decided on ere visiting you, having already heard most of what you have told me from Matoha, particularly that portion regarding Hena's illness. At his earnest prayer, I promised to see Hena, and at your solicitation I will do all I can in promoting her recovery,—more I cannot promise; so now adieu for the present. I spare you reproaches, as I perceive your regret is

genuine. All I trust is, that the lesson may prove lasting."

"Bless you, Seymour, for your forbearance," burst forth De Lorme, seizing him by the hand; "you give me a chance of redeeming myself in your eyes which I shall not let slip. Palliate my offence in Hena's eyes, if possible, and give me the earliest news about her state, I implore you."

Matoha was anxiously pacing up and down the path, awaiting Mr. Seymour's coming. Going as far as he had, he wanted to see the effect of his presence on the sick unconscious girl. Thus, the moment he arrived he was ushered into her room. Her state had not been exaggerated in the least; the once plump, pretty girl was scarcely to be recognized in the emaciated frame and pinched face before him. She stared vacantly at him as he approached the bed; muttered something incoherently, till she dropped into an easy slumber, visited by fearful visions as the large drops of perspiration on her forehead indicated, as well as the moans from her parched lips, and startled wild cry of terror. Taai said, this had been the case from the very beginning; she could obtain no repose, to refresh her sinking strength, which she attributed to an evil spirit hovering about her, rather than to bodily ailment.

CHAPTER IX.

HENA AND DE LORME.

MR. SEYMOUR was really alarmed when he felt how burning hot was her head, evidently the seat of her intense sufferings ; at once he dispatched Matoha for the French surgeon, who soon made his appearance, examined his patient minutely, asked a few questions, and then called for scissors, water, and towels. In a moment the head was shorn of its once beautiful locks, now matted and neglected. Mr. Seymour held Hena up during the operation. Wet cloths were applied, which seemed to relieve her considerably. Dr. Chaval, the medical attendant, then beckoned Mr. Seymour out.

“ *Mon cher*, who is to see that my directions are carried out? I know what the natives are, expect everything for nothing ; now I cannot afford this, my time is too valuable ; the girl is in a dangerous state, and I have but little hopes, I tell you candidly ,

and ought to have been sent for before. They have been plying her with their native remedies, I bet my life, which accounts for her feeble pulse. Who is she? what is her name, pray?"

"Have no fear, Doctor, your services shall be well remunerated, as well as your prescriptions attended to," said Mr. Seymour sarcastically. "It was I who sent for you, and beg you will do all in your power to relieve the poor child. Others beside myself are interested in Hena likewise."

"Hena! goddess of my soul! you don't mean to say that girl within is her?"

"I do indeed."

"*Sapristi!* there is no time to be lost; let me see her again."

She was awake, seemed very restless, and her breathing fearfully laboured. The doctor spoke kindly to her, but she never turned her eyes his way.

"She recognizes no one, apparently?" he asked.

"No one," said Taaï and Matoha in a breath.

Most active measures were at once pursued, with ultimate success.

As Mr. Seymour walked back to Papeete, he told the doctor in confidence why he had been interested in Hena, and explained his presence there.

"De Lorme dares not at present approach her, he has therefore begged me to attend to her comfort, but I fear my doing so may tell against the girl."

"Bah! *mon cher*, if you begin to heed what people

say, you will have enough to do ; *je m'en moque bien, moi.* *Allons*, here comes that precious De Lorme himself ; he may well look miserable, the *coquin*."

De Lorme, in his impatience, had wandered forth to meet Mr. Seymour.

"How did you find her?" he exclaimed hurriedly.

"Dr. Chaval hopes, with great care, he may bring her round ; but I dare not deceive you, De Lorme, she is indeed fearfully ill ; such a change I never expected to see in so short a time."

"Ah ! Doctor, if she dies I shall never again hold up my head, for I have caused all her sufferings. Say, is there grace for such a villain as I?"

"Come, come, you must not despond ; we will do all we can, rest satisfied. I have always been much interested in Hena, whom, I must confess, I did not recognize when first I saw her this afternoon, she used to be so pretty."

"My God, this is worse than all ; what a wreck she must have become ! Oh, Seymour, have pity, and leave her not to the tender mercies of those native people."

"There you are correct," cried Dr. Chaval ; "I have no more confidence in them than they had in me, very likely. The rascals, with their humbugging medicines and lotions—mere chance remedies ! As soon as our backs were turned, they resorted to them again, no doubt."

Mr. Seymour smiled, and disbelieved, yet was

urged to return and see the doctor's prescriptions carried out; Matoha had already been to the apothecary's for the drugs, which were at once administered, amidst many struggles from Hena, who ever had an antipathy to nauseous doses; and even now, all unconscious as to what was passing around her, she yet endeavoured to resist. Her efforts, however, were like the fluttering of a bird, as Mr. Seymour compelled her to swallow them, and then soothed her into quietness with gentle words and actions. Matoha stood the while looking gloomily on; it seemed to him she was calmer when Mr. Seymour was near; never had she submitted so readily to be touched by him, even when she did not recognize him as Matoha. Never had he been able to coax her to sleep, as was now the case under the mesmeric influence of a mere touch, frequently as he had tried so to do. There she lay slumbering almost naturally; he turned away with a deep sigh, which caused Mr. Seymour to look up, and divine what was passing in the poor fellow's mind.

Several days thus passed, when they had the satisfaction of seeing her rally,—her malady yielding at length to the many remedies applied by Dr. Chaval, as he had promised, who devoted himself to this case heart and soul, aided by Mr. Seymour. They personally did everything, each morning: the one supported, whilst the other dressed the blister on the neck, and forced her to take whatever was absolutely neces-

sary. It would be ridiculous to suppose the latter could act thus, without some interest in the sufferer arising in his breast; it required a more callous heart than his to look coldly back the timid, pleading expression of her large lustrous eyes, despite all she had gone through. Her fearfully fragile appearance rendered her more attractive, if possible, than ever, scarcely a being of this world. None of this was lost on Matoha, who now contented himself in looking on from a distance. He had sacrificed himself for her recovery and happiness, nor did he even now regret the step he had taken when in such bitter grief and apprehension. Mr. Seymour's hope was that when Hena should be perfectly convalescent, she would see the impossibility of anything but mere friendship between them. Kindness, though firmness of purpose, would effectually convince her of this; till then, she should be his peculiar charge, and derive all the happiness she could from his frequent presence; for, as the doctor justly observed, "every cause of agitation must be avoided, as a relapse in her present enfeebled state might prove fatal."

The kind Sisters of St. Joseph visited her frequently. Mr. Seymour had likewise seen and prevailed on Mrs. Fenton to do so. When Mrs. Wells heard of such a proceeding she was highly scandalized, vowed Hena was the vilest of her sex, and that Mrs. Fenton would live to rue her folly. The girl had not been contented with one lover; she must needs have a dozen,

and was now paying the penalty of her infamy. She wound up by begging Mrs. Fenton to inquire why Mr. De Lorme was taking her illness so to heart, unless he had had a hand in it? Mrs. Fenton took the hint, and did inquire, which resulted in Mr. Seymour explaining the persecution the poor girl had endured from De Lorme, who now proved to be her brother, and placed in her hands the letter already alluded to, which removed every lingering doubt from her mind. Mrs. Wells, however, ridiculed the trumped-up story, saying,

“Do as you like; my advice was merely in your, not my interest, but of course you prefer following Mr. Seymour’s. How that man has contrived to ingratiate himself into this house, as he has done, I cannot imagine. I believe he has bewitched you all, his influence is so unaccountable; everything is Mr. Seymour nowadays; heigho! what will people come to next?”

“Really, Mrs. Wells, this is going too far; I am at a loss to know to what you refer. We all esteem Mr. Seymour, who is a polished gentleman in every sense of the word, and your repeated animadversions I certainly consider most ill-judged and misplaced.”

“Do you call it mere esteem that causes Mary to blush whenever his name is mentioned, to hang breathlessly on his every word, and follow his advice without a murmur, which she has done ever since that absurd trip to the lake? From a simple child she

has merged into a thoughtful woman. I am not blind. I always told you what madness it was to allow her to go without you, or a female companion," snapped the widow.

"Mrs. Wells, I am astonished to hear you express yourself thus; you appear always more inclined to see things in an unsatisfactory light than otherwise; but as far as my family are concerned, I must beg you to be more discreet and less meddlesome," said Mrs. Fenton indignantly.

"Dear me, how touchy you are! I must have trodden on delicate ground. Mary merits a better husband in all conscience than that conceited, dictatorial puppy, with his airs and graces."

"You need have no fears on that score; Mr. Seymour has as much idea of Mary, as she has of him; under any circumstances, you must allow us to judge on such a subject for ourselves. I myself would never dream of dictating to others in these matters."

Mrs. Fenton's tone was not to be misunderstood, which caused Mrs. Wells to make good her retreat, in a far from enviable mood. Fanny saw this at a glance, and tried to get out of the way, but her endeavours were quickly detected and frustrated.

"Where are you sneaking off to, I should like to know? What have you been doing all the morning?" snarled her mother. "Nothing! I thought as much, you lazy, worthless child, without a sensible idea in your stupid brain; no wonder you can't make

a friend. Even Mary Fenton, whom you make a ridiculous fuss over, would not be troubled with such a dunce. Had you been a companionable, chatty girl, the probability is she would have invited you to go with her to the lake; it was a perfect insult, her not doing so, but you of course lacked the delicacy to resent it; what must people think of the slight, everybody supposing you such friends?"

"Perhaps Mary thought you would not like me to go," ventured Fanny, who from repeated remarks on the subject felt rather hurt at the omission.

"Is it possible you could frame such a brilliant remark, dolt, when you were present the day I gave the broadest hint about your longing to see the lake, and a lot of stuff more, which never emanated from your dull noddle? But I am as well pleased as it is; if you can't display dignity I can, so for the future visit them less, do you hear? If ever I catch you going there without my consent, I will box your ears soundly."

"The idea of Mrs. Fenton visiting that Hena, is beyond my comprehension; the next thing, she will be an inmate of their house, to please Mr. Seymour, of course. What causes that man too, to interest himself in the girl, puzzles me likewise; but I will ferret his motive out yet, trust me for that," she muttered to herself.

Mrs. Fenton sat long after her visitor had withdrawn, thinking over her words. She dared scarcely

acknowledge to herself the change which had come over her darling of late, ever since her return (indeed, as Mrs. Wells had remarked) from that unfortunate trip, when she threw her arms about her neck and sobbed bitterly, and for days after roamed restlessly from room to room, unable to occupy her mind with any degree of interest,—her sole theme, the pleasure she had experienced, and Mr. Seymour's kindness when she was ill. She never seemed to weary of singing his praises, and when his well-known step was heard approaching, would bound off to receive him, and return in his company, with changing colour, and eyes gleaming with pleasure. No longer did she complain of his patronizing manner towards her, which, if anything, was more noticeable than ever. At any moment, a warning word or look from him checked her. Much as Hena had been discussed of late, Mary refrained from expressing an opinion; why? because Mr. Seymour disapproved of young girls doing so on such subjects. These, and many other like circumstances occurred to Mrs. Fenton, as she sat dwelling on probabilities and possibilities, till she seemed to be able to draw therefrom but one conclusion. She, however, determined to watch her child more closely for the future, and endeavour to check any dangerous symptom in time, for much as she admired Mr. Seymour, she had no desire to part with Mary, who was too young for any engagement of the sort on the one hand, whilst on

the other, she felt convinced Mr. Seymour regarded her but in the light of a child, and treated her altogether as such.

Her resolution was at once put into practice, and the result far from satisfactory. On the strength of which she referred the matter to her husband, repeating to him her misgivings, and inquiring "whether he had noticed anything himself?"

"Not I, my love," he replied cheerfully, "and I think it very natural, after a journey of the sort, being thrown so constantly in Seymour's society, that Mary should continue to enjoy it, and miss him when absent."

"I wish to Heaven I had never consented to her going at all."

"It is rather late in the day to lament over that, Alice; take my advice, and leave matters to take their own course. I myself would wish nothing better than to consign our Mary to such a guide through life. He is just the sort of husband she needs, kind yet firm, to say nothing of his fine personal appearance, and agreeable manners. As to means, he seems to have sufficient; if not, I possess enough for both."

"You have settled everything very nicely, John, certainly; but suppose now that Mr. Seymour entertained no serious intention towards Mary, in the present or future, what then?" asked his wife.

"Why, there are as many good fish in the water as ever came out of it, we are told."

"Oh, you men ! how wilfully blind you are at times ! Now John dear, have patience with me yet awhile. It is not Mr. Seymour who troubles me, but our own child. What if she should give him her young heart, unsought and unrequited ? What a dreadful thing it would be for us all !"

"And why should you imagine this ? Mary is no simpleton, and has sufficient pride to prevent any catastrophe of the sort. You appear inclined, my wife, to harrow up your feelings unnecessarily to-day ; don't be silly ; depend upon it, what is to be will be. Mary would make a good match for any one. Young, pretty, clever, and rich ; what more can a man want in selecting a wife ?"

"You seem bent on ridding yourself of her, young as she is ; a mere child," said Mrs. Fenton, somewhat offended at his talking so coolly and indifferently about their only child.

"How you women jump at conclusions ; not very flattering ones either, at times," replied her husband, in a vexed tone.

"I did not believe it in reality, John."

"Then why say such things, my darling ? It was scarcely considerate, when you so well know how intensely I prize and love our Mary ; nor would I ever dream of parting with her unless to further her own peculiar ideas of happiness," he replied with emotion.

Mrs. Fenton had to be satisfied to act according to her husband's wishes, although she could not help

entertaining doubts as to the wisdom of leaving things to take their own course. Each time she noticed Mary more silent than usual, she became uneasy. Every varying expression she attributed to one source, whilst Mary herself remained all unconscious of what was passing in her mother's mind, or in her own heart. Indeed, when Mr. Seymour was present, she felt perfectly content, no desire connected with him in the future ever entered her head ; when absent, she missed him sadly. Why, she never asked herself any more than she expected to keep him ever at her side.

During this time, Hena made but little progress towards convalescence, much to the Doctor's annoyance. "Something on her mind retards her recovery," he frequently remarked. Mr. Seymour thought this too, but forbore to say so, from the moment Hena recognized those about her. She evidently desired an explanation, which no one as yet vouchsafed, in accordance with Mr. Seymour's positive orders, which Taai felt much inclined to rebel against. She never had liked him ; and his cool avoidance of her, and what she considered his dictatorial manner, did not tend to raise him in her estimation. She often reproached poor Matoha for what she ought to have praised in him, namely, his self-abnegation which she confounded with weakness.

Each time Mr. Seymour now approached Hena she became so agitated that he could no longer remain totally silent.

"Does my visiting you give rise to this state of nervousness, Hena?" he one day inquired; "for if so, I had better cease coming. Pray don't tremble so, and tell me what you wish; my sole desire is to please you, of course."

"I don't feel nervous," she replied, in a feeble voice, whilst the tell-tale tears belied her words.

"It seems very much like it, though you are altogether too weak for much conversation at present; when you are stronger we will have a long talk together, but, till then, you must endeavour to keep quiet, and not worry yourself with thought. If, in the next few days, I do not see a visible change in you for the better, I shall attribute your continued prostration to something on your mind, which you ought to discard, as injurious to your health. We are all bound, Hena, no matter in what sphere of life, to guard that gift of Providence."

"What is the use of my living?" moaned Hena. "I have known but little happiness, and the future presents nothing bright to me."

"You think so now, because you are ill and weak; on the contrary, I see a pleasant life in store for you, if you are wise, and will profit by it," replied Mr. Seymour impressively. She was too prostrated to question his meaning or say more; her heavy lids drooped, and she slept, through sheer exhaustion.

De Lorme was far from satisfied; he was daily seeking to have an interview with Hena, which was

denied him by those about her, and, although he dared not show it, he began to feel jealous of Mr. Seymour's position, who enjoyed facilities refused him. His feelings were of a varied nature, scarcely comprehended by himself: at one moment entertaining but a brotherly sentiment towards the sick girl; at another, the old passion gained ascendancy, and he would actually doubt the relationship existing between them; at length he insisted on Mr. Seymour's telling Hena everything. "Of course she will never consent to see me, so long as she looks upon me in the old light," he would exclaim impatiently. She was accordingly told of her relationship to him, and his deep contrition of past conduct towards her, by Mr. Seymour, who managed the communication so delicately as not even to excite her, beyond a flushed cheek and tearful eye.

"Would you not like to see your brother, for a moment, Hena?" he inquired.

"Oh no! for pity's sake spare me," she cried, shrinking away fearfully.

"Very well, Hena, as you please, no one intends to urge you to do so, at present, so there is no occasion for this unnecessary alarm," he replied reassuringly.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour, you do not know all, otherwise you would never even have asked me to receive him," she murmured in a choking voice.

"Yes, I do, Hena, which accounts for the care and

interest I have taken in your behalf during your illness. I allow, De Lorme acted most shamefully throughout, not only in persecuting you with his attentions, but likewise in having recourse to a falsehood with regard to myself," he said with emphasis, "which he framed to meet his own ends. Still, when he appealed to me in his distress of mind, I forgave and pitied him; you will try and not do less, won't you?"

"I am afraid I have a very wicked spirit; I feel as if I never could pardon Mr. De Lorme, even at the risk of displeasing, and lowering myself in your estimation, Mr. Seymour, and you can scarcely know how dreadful that thought is to me."

"I have no doubt I shall succeed yet in bringing you to reason, if you really do feel as you assert, about my good opinion," replied Mr. Seymour laughingly.

Dr. Chaval decided that Hena required change of air and scene; Mr. Seymour, therefore, suggested sending her to the Sisters of St. Joseph's. The bare idea, however, distressed her so much that it was at once abandoned. "Might as well bury her right off, as insist on anything against her inclination. I would not give much for her life anyhow," said the Doctor; "but, as long as it lasts, we must do the best for her, so I intend asking Mrs. Fenton to receive her. She will take excellent care of her, I know; feed her up, whilst Mary's gay prattle will cheer her drooping spirits."

"I scarcely think Mrs. Fenton will consent to this arrangement, Doctor, for several reasons," demurred Mr. Seymour.

"Don't you? I know better; I have attended plenty of patients at her request, so she can scarcely refuse the first I have ever made her. No, I feel confident of my success, *mon cher*, so *au revoir*." The Doctor was correct; Mrs. Fenton readily acquiesced in his plan, and a room was prepared for Hena's reception,—much to Mary's delight, who was in high glee when she informed Mr. Seymour of the fact, feeling sure of his approbation.

"How is it, Mr. Seymour, that you did not prompt Mamma to do this before?" she inquired.

"I should have been bold indeed to contemplate such a thing, much less act upon it, Mary," he replied gravely.

"How so? do you disapprove of our receiving poor Hena here?"

"Far from it; a poor sufferer like Hena, needs just such gentle tending as she will receive here; I almost envy her her lot, Mary."

"Then why have hesitated to urge so kind an action?" insisted Mary, with a heightened colour.

"You little piece of curiosity, suppose I refuse to proffer any further explanation?"

"You would never be so unkind, when you must be aware that my only desire is to feel that you approve of our doings."

“And why should you doubt it, Mary? Was I not one to suggest and induce your mother’s visits to her, which resulted in many acts of nameless kindness, so gratifying to an invalid? Why then make fresh appeals? surely there is a limit to all things?”

“Thank you for calming my fears, and now come and see her room. There, is it not inviting?”

“So much so, Mary, that I should not mind getting up an illness on my own account; if I thought, in my turn, I should be called to occupy it.”

“Better not trust to any such chance, Sir, I warn you,” laughed Mary.

“Under any circumstances, I shall wait till a vacancy occurs,” said Mr. Seymour.

“I only trust Hena will be happy here; but I have my doubts somehow; she is so accustomed to the natives, and so inseparable from Taai.”

“I scarcely think she can be in her element yonder; De Lorme would like her to return to the convent, I know, but the suggestion seemed to distress her so much, that the Doctor advised it should not be referred to again.

“Indeed! then I am sure she will never consent to come here, after refusing to go to the Sisters, whom she is so very partial to.”

“You misunderstand, Mary; she has as yet refused to go nowhere, nor do I entertain a doubt as to her entire satisfaction, at accepting your mother’s most kind offer.”

What then was his surprise, after expressing the above opinion, to find Hena, opposing decidedly a change in her abode! He felt so indignant that he would not even attempt to influence her, merely saying, that she was of course the best judge of what was most agreeable to herself, and coolly withdrew. Hena sat up in bed, looking after his receding form in blank dismay, longing to call him back, but not daring to frame the word, so awed was she by his slightest look of dissatisfaction.

When the Doctor called later in the day, he found his patient in a burning fever again. Taai quickly told him what had caused it, when he reproached Hena for her own sensitiveness.

"Doctor, what is the use of my living?" she exclaimed passionately; "I only wish you had left me to die when I was so ill."

"Does Seymour's anger affect you so much, Hena?" he inquired, surprised at her words and manner.

"Yes, it does," she sobbed forth.

"Then he shall return and make it all right at once," and before she could prevent him he was off.

He met Mr. Seymour going to the Fentons'.

"*Allons, mon cher,*" he said, accosting him; "you must not be angry with that poor child in this way; she cannot stand it."

"I am not so, Doctor; but really I see the necessity of withdrawing from Hena's, for various reasons," said Mr. Seymour earnestly.

"I understand you, *mon cher*, but you must do this less suddenly ; in her present state, any cause of grief might have a most injurious effect upon her. Your leaving her as you did this morning, has thrown her back considerably. I found her dreadfully feverish and excited, and I came to bring you back. Get her to the Fentons', and then act as you please. To gratify you, she will do anything you please, I am convinced," urged the Doctor.

"You give me credit, Doctor, for more influence than I possess."

"No, no, *mon cher*, Hena is altogether too candid to deceive me ; and I cannot allow my patient to be trifled with at this stage of her convalescence, so come along," insisted the Doctor.

"To-morrow, then ; not to-day, most decidedly," and with this promise the Doctor had to be satisfied.

Accordingly, the next morning Mr. Seymour stood beside Hena's bedside ; she heard him approach, but made no movement till he addressed her.

"I am sorry you are not so well," he said ; "you are not half careful enough of yourself, I fear, Hena," said Mr. Seymour kindly.

"I don't care about myself," she replied, in a tremulous voice ; "but I want to please you, Mr. Seymour, if possible."

"I am not a very difficult subject, Hena, yet I confess to being disappointed in you yesterday."

"Why?"

"Because I supposed you would have been delighted at the prospect of passing a few weeks at Mrs. Fenton's, to at least show, that you appreciated such unexampled kindness as you have been receiving."

"I will go wherever you wish," she murmured.

"I am not satisfied, Hena; it is not what I may wish, but your pleasure, which is the question to be decided."

Poor Hena seemed nonplussed, and looked so distressed, that even Mr. Seymour felt sorry at her manifest incertitude; yet he awaited her reply in silence, though she looked so pleadingly in his face, that he would fain have helped her out of her embarrassment.

"Tell me what to do, Mr. Seymour; only tell me what will be for the best?" she implored.

"If my opinion is what you want, Hena, you shall certainly have it. If, in going to Mrs. Fenton, you do so, determined to benefit by the change, I say go by all means. If, on the other hand, you intend doing so, against your own inclinations, will consequently fret and render yourself, as well as those about you, unhappy, you had better remain where you are," he said decidedly.

"I should not be unhappy if I could continue to see those I am accustomed to have about me," she murmured in a low tone.

"If you mean Taai, I have no doubt Mrs. Fenton will readily consent to her coming daily to see you."

"When can I go?" she asked in a voice all tears.

"Have you made up your mind to be reasonable, Hena, and show those interested in you what an effort you will make not to despond, but to recover your strength as fast as possible, by following well-meant advice?" he asked, bending over her.

"I will do my best, Mr. Seymour."

"That is a good girl; I am sure you will keep your word, so the sooner you make a beginning the better. I will see Matoha, and get him to attend to your removal this afternoon."

"Mr. Seymour, will it be a very long time before I see you again?" There was a world of entreaty in this question, so innocently put, only too well understood by Mr. Seymour, who felt inclined to make a cold retort, but the Doctor's words recurred to him, and he forbore.

"That will depend on yourself, Hena. When you are well you will of course see me at Mrs. Fenton's, where I go almost daily," he said in a reserved tone.

"You come here every day also," sighed Hena.

"Up to the present time I have done so, at De Lorme's particular request; but my intention was not to have continued, when once you were convalescent."

"May I know why, Mr. Seymour?" she inquired, rather surprised.

"Certainly, Hena; in the first place, I consider my being seen here so often might give rise to unkind remarks; in the second, I do not suppose I could be

of any further material service to you, now that you are so much better."

"I can never forget all your kindness, Mr. Seymour," she said hesitatingly.

"Do not mention it, Hena; I would do the same for any other suffering mortal."

"I do not doubt that," she replied somewhat bitterly; "yet the recollection will be very dear to me,—it is the one bright spot in my dark existence. I do not ask for much in this world, Mr. Seymour, but one thing is, your good opinion."

"Oh! you have it, my child, I assure you," he said compassionately.

"You do not despise me in the least for feeling as I do?"

"Assuredly not, Hena; why should I?"

"I don't know, I thought you might; it is that idea which has made me feel so unhappy of late."

"Then discard it at once; for, on the contrary, I entertain quite an interest in your future welfare, I assure you."

"Good bye then, Mr. Seymour, I will not seek to detain you longer," and she held out her little wasted hand to him.

He took it kindly, as he saw her eyes swimming with tears she vainly sought to repress.

"Promise me, Hena, to make yourself comfortable and contented, where you are going; remember

not to give way to sadness, and to be guided in all things by Mrs. Fenton?" he asked.

"Yes," she now sobbed.

"Then all will be well, I know; I shall be very anxious to learn how you bear the removal, and will therefore call this evening to inquire." With these parting words he left her; and oh, how cold they sounded in the poor girl's ears, who had so hoped for something kinder, more affectionate! He had dropped by mistake his handkerchief, which she quickly gathered up, and pressed to her lips, then hid from other eyes. No sooner had she effected this, than he returned in search of it; looked on the floor and bed in vain, when a glance at her flushed, confused face enlightened him. With a scarcely suppressed smile, he said, "it mattered not," and again withdrew.

Taai was furious, when she found Mr. Seymour had influenced Hena to leave her home for another. She rushed out and reproached Matoha bitterly.

"It is all your doings, Matoha; why did you ever bring that cold-hearted, proud man here? She would have got better just the same without him, and her long illness might have cured her foolish fancy for him."

"I can't help that, Taai," Matoha replied in a sad tone; "I shall have done all I could to further her happiness; more could not be expected, nor less, after what she confided to me."

"All your sacrifices have been made in vain, as

regards Mr. Seymour, I am convinced ; he but pities Hena, love he has none ; for just imagine his being beside her so constantly, yet has he never touched her, beyond holding her, whilst the Doctor dressed the blister."

"I do not care about hearing these things, Taai," he said coldly.

"Of course you don't, now that I am to be deprived of Hena's companionship ; I who have never been a day parted from her ; but what care you for that either?"

"There you are unjust, Taai ; Mr. Seymour assured me you should go daily to see her, and do what was necessary for her. How else could I have hoped to hear about her?" he said mournfully.

CHAPTER X.

HENA'S REMOVAL.

HENA is at Mrs. Fenton's, placed in bed, and left alone to sleep off the fatigue she has undergone. Mary was deeply affected at first seeing her. It seemed almost impossible that such a shadow could exist. Fanny Wells was likewise there, peeping in with true girlish curiosity, and quite shared Mary's sorrow at what Hena must have suffered.

"I wish Mamma could see her now, Mary," she whispered; "it would prevent her ever saying another unkind word of her, I am sure."

"Perhaps not," said Mary doubtfully, who could never imagine Mrs. Wells becoming contrite, no matter how harrowing the sight. Fanny seemed to divine her thoughts.

"Ah, Mary! I frequently envy you your good luck, but very likely you deserve it more than I," sighed Fanny; "I often think, if poor Papa could look down

and see how I fared, it would make him sad enough, he was always so loving and kind to me himself."

"You must have patience, Fanny. They say it is a long lane that has no turning. One of these days you will get married, and be independent."

"Who knows? all married people are not independent. I might fall on a bad-tempered man, for instance."

"You would be in luck then, certainly," said Mary laughingly; "but come, it is wrong of us to talk like this, with Hena so near and so ill."

"True, I wish I could do something for her; I wonder if Mamma would let me?"

"Better not ask; besides, she wants for nothing. Mr. Seymour has given Mamma a purse, to provide all that is necessary; Mr. De Lorme sent it, and he is her brother, you know."

"Do you really think he is, Mary?"

"I don't think about it," replied Mary indignantly; "I am positive. Mamma saw, and read, his father's letter from France, on the subject of seeking her out, and he intends sending her to Europe, when she is well enough."

"How nice! I am very glad for her sake. She must be quite proud of her handsome brother," said Fanny. "But do you know, Mamma calls it all a trumped-up story; she says, you will never get her to swallow such trash."

"Fortunately, it is a matter of perfect indifference

to those most concerned, whether she does or not," said Mary ; "still, Fanny, you ought to be more careful how you repeat your mother's remarks ; you, above all, should avoid placing her in an odious light."

Fanny hung her head. She was not a very intelligent girl, yet she understood her young Mentor's reproof as a very just one, and consequently felt abashed. The girl was capable of deep filial affection, which harsh usage from the one who ought to have fostered it had almost entirely blunted. At times she entertained really wicked feelings, and gave vent to undutiful speeches. Her intimacy with Mary Fenton alone preserved some degree of delicacy in her, which the resentful mother now wished to put a stop to, permitting but an occasional visit of late, so as to learn what was passing in her neighbour's house. Fanny only too gladly availed herself of the privilege when accorded, as she was deeply attached to the whole Fenton family, looking upon their peaceful home as an earthly paradise, wherein she had passed some of the happiest hours of her young life. She almost envied Hena the treat in store for her, and would even now have exchanged places with her for the sake of occupying that cheerful room, and to be nursed into renewed health by such hands as Mrs. Fenton's and Mary's.

When Hena awoke, her large eyes wandered wonderingly round on every object ; she felt more com-

fortable and refreshed than she had done for a very long time. Soft footsteps had repeatedly approached her couch, but as lightly receded, fearing to disturb her peaceful slumber. The cosy bed, with its white muslin mosquito-curtain invited repose, as the neat cottage furniture, with its delicate self-colour and bright bouquets of flowers pleased the eye. There she lay, so perfectly calm and content, that she feared to move a finger lest she should break the spell. Presently, however, Miss Fenton made her appearance, followed by Mary bearing a small tray, on which was placed a cup of chocolate and some thin toast. How gently she was lifted to a sitting posture, the pillows placed comfortably at her back, whilst she partook of this (to her unaccustomed palate) delicious beverage with positive relish.

"You feel better already, I think," said Mrs. Fenton, in a tone modulated to an invalid's ear.

"I feel almost well. Oh, dear Mrs. Fenton, how kind of you and Mary to trouble yourselves thus about me; and such a pretty room as this is; I hope I shall not spoil it!" said Hena innocently.

"I have no fear of your doing that, Hena," replied Mrs. Fenton kindly; "but I am glad you are pleased with your apartment."

"Indeed I am;" and she looked round once more admiringly. "I was told if I did not always seem happy, people would think I did not appreciate their kindness. I intend doing my best; but if I do not

always succeed, you will not consider me ungrateful to you, Mrs. Fenton?"

"Indeed I shall not; but I trust you won't find the advice you received difficult to follow, as I should very much regret not seeing you as cheerful as a girl of your age ought to be," said Mrs. Fenton cheerfully.

"I am not like most girls," said Hena sadly.

"In what do you differ, my child?"

The question caused Hena to burst into a torrent of tears.

"Oh, Mrs. Fenton! I am a very miserable one in every way," she at length sobbed.

"This will never do, Hena; dismal thoughts must be entirely discarded here, else we shall never have you recover; try and sleep this mood off, like a good child;" and she motioned Mary away, remaining herself till she felt assured by the soft regular breathing that the girl slept again.

Hena contrived soon to win Mrs. Fenton's heart by her affectionate ways,—her loving nature displaying itself in every action, from the wistful tender gaze to the long lingering touch of her slender fingers, as they wound themselves into her passive hand as she stood beside the bed. The pleased, glistening eye, after some act of kindness, was no more to be resisted than the plaintive voice speaking her thanks. What the sunshine is to a flower, was love to Hena; she basked and throve on it, as she had drooped and pined

for want of it. Taai visited her daily, laden with flowers, as the most acceptable gift she could bring; and Hena knew only too well who helped her to gather them. She amused herself weaving garlands for Mary, who held her head ready to be adorned,—not only for the fun of the thing, but that she believed them becoming. Thus decked, she presented herself to Mr. Seymour, who was sure to pay her some compliment, only to be too readily believed. In the meantime, Hena progressed rapidly in the recovery of her strength, and longed, for certain reasons best known to herself, to sit up in a chair, as the first step towards ceasing to be an invalid. Mrs. Fenton refused to listen to her pleadings, considering her yet too feeble, but the tearful eye and quivering lip at length won her reluctant consent. With what a thrill of delight she saw herself, wrapped up and placed in a comfortable chair, within view of the lawn!

Since her arrival at Mrs. Fenton's, Hena had never seen Mr. Seymour. Several times she had heard his voice, and was told of his particular inquiries by Mary, who thought her heightened colour at the mention of his name but a natural sentiment on her part, after the interest he had taken in her of late. It was when alone that Hena gave vent to her emotion at being thus deprived the pleasure of his society, which others around her continually engaged. How much worse would she have felt, had she known he had been invited several times

to see her by Mrs. Fenton, but had persistently refused. His reasons were laudable, no doubt, determined as he was in not encouraging her *penchant* for himself by word or deed, so the less she saw him the better. Whilst she had been so very ill, and he attending her, a deeper interest than he liked to own to himself was taken in her, one that even a good action scarcely warranted. After all, he was but human; constantly seeing a young helpless girl before him, laid on a bed of sickness through her unsought affection for himself, ready to be all he wished at the slightest bidding, proved hard to be resisted, and required a strong effort of will to turn coldly from the attractive picture. When he ceased to see her, he thought of all this the more; but his line of conduct was marked out, and swerve from it he would not, however painful it might be to treat with indifference the passionate attractive girl, whose heart, he knew, bounded only for him, as did every pulsation of her delicate frame.

As Mr. Seymour frequently visited the house during the day, Hena fully expected to see him on this occasion, and sat with a feeling scarcely to be described, awaiting his coming; but as hour after hour passed without his making his appearance, her heart sank despondingly. Despite Mrs. Fenton's wish that she would not overtask her strength, she insisted on remaining up.

"As you please, Hena; but remember, if I find

you any the worse to-morrow, I will keep you in bed for several days to come as a punishment for your wilfulness," said Mrs. Fenton decidedly. It was the very first time Hena had openly opposed Mrs. Fenton's advice, and there now appeared something dogged in her so doing, as she sat on with tearful eyes and compressed lips, watching to catch the sound of any approaching footsteps, which she was doomed not to hear that day. Taai was the only one astute enough to guess her object in remaining up, hoping against hope, as it were, till at length from sheer exhaustion she had to retire, when she soon wept herself to sleep; but, as might be expected, the next day found her feverish. Mrs. Fenton felt annoyed, and blamed herself of weakness in allowing Hena to do as she pleased.

"You must never expect me to indulge you again, Hena," she said, as she applied remedies to her head, which ached intensely. "I had no idea you could be so stubborn as to render yourself ill through a mere freak."

When, after several days, Hena wished to sit up again, Mrs. Fenton refused in a tone that silenced her, yet brought the ready tears to her eyes. She tried to convince her of the necessity of being careful, and concluded by telling her they would certainly quarrel if she was not more reasonable. Mr. Seymour, who entered the hall during the above dialogue, distinguished Hena's tearful voice. He put his head

in at the open door and inquired, "how the invalid progressed?"

"Come in and judge for yourself, Mr. Seymour," said Mrs. Fenton.

He approached the bed, and was pained to see Hena's grief-stricken face, which she was endeavouring to conceal from him.

"Why, Hena, what is the matter?" he said kindly, whilst he gently took her little wasted hand in his.

"Her present trouble is my refusal to allow her to rise," said Mrs. Fenton; "she is really not equal to the effort to-day."

"You certainly ought to be the best judge of what is proper for her to do, and I am sure Hena will never think of opposing any desire of yours," said Mr. Seymour pointedly.

Mrs. Fenton and Mary smiled, whilst Hena's quivering lip and streaming eyes proved that she was detected in a *flagrant délit*; the hand trembled so perceptibly in his that Mr. Seymour quietly released it, and addressed Mary, so as to give her time to recover the agitation, every now and then glancing towards her with a reassuring smile, which soon set her at ease, and rendered her comparatively satisfied.

"How do you find our patient looking, Mr. Seymour?" inquired Mary.

"Not very blooming, I must confess. Why, Hena, I had no idea you were going to be so lazy about getting well; if you do not make an effort soon, I

shall conclude you have become attached to this cosy little chamber and care not to quit it."

"There you are grandly mistaken," laughed Mary; "her one absorbing desire is to leave it as soon as possible, her greatest ambition to be dressed and sitting up. Is it not so, Hena?"

"I am sure I should get stronger if I were allowed to sit up every day," she replied, in a feeble quavering voice, as she looked up in Mrs. Fenton's face.

"Surely, my child, you do not think I would keep you here a day longer than necessary," answered Mrs. Fenton. "Oh! I see to what you allude, but I consider my threat has been carried out to the letter, Hena; to-morrow, if you are as well as you are this afternoon, you shall sit up for an hour—there now."

"Let me know the hour, then, Mrs. Fenton, please," said Mr. Seymour, "so that I may come and congratulate her on the feat." Hena, for the first time, raised her large eyes to his face, to read his meaning, but nothing was to be detected there. When told how she had taxed her strength on the first day she had risen, he readily divined why she had done so, and took this opportunity of recompensing her for her disappointment.

"If Hena don't get well, and come to my party," said Mary, "I will never forgive her."

"Pray, when is it to take place?" inquired Mr. Seymour.

"On my birthday ; she has just one fortnight before her."

"What do you think, Hena, of the prospect?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"I never was at a party, and I don't think I should ever like such things," she replied timidly.

"There speaks Sœur Agatha," cried Mary ; "Hena has contrived to imbibe some of her sentiments, I see."

"Very few of them, I fear, Mary," said Hena with a faint blush.

"She is a great favourite, this pretty Sister, is she not, Hena?" inquired Mr. Seymour, for the want of something to say to the poor girl.

"I should think so," replied Mary. "I remember how jealous I used to be of Sœur Agatha's preference for Hena, until one day she asked her if she would not like to be a nun, when Hena's reply in the negative drew forth such a look of reproof and commiseration, that I thought it as well I was not considered a fit subject for holy orders."

"So you would not like to be a Sister of Charity, Hena?" laughed Mr. Seymour. She shook her head.

"You are quite right ; much good as I consider the Sisters effect among the sick and poor, yet I fancy they might do a great deal more by mixing with the world, in lieu of being shut out from it."

"Still, I can't help thinking Hena would make a charming nun, she looks to me cut out for one," in-

sisted Mary. "How would Mr. De Lorme like such a destiny for his sister?" At the mention of his name Hena compressed her lips ; she little knew that this was actually what he desired above everything. He endeavoured all in his power, indeed, to prevent her becoming an inmate of Mrs. Fenton's ; why, he would not explain, perhaps he could not ; but certain it was that he shrank from the idea of her mixing in society, and would gladly have seen the gates of a convent shut on her for ever, rather than there should be the slightest risk of her marrying. The bare thought of such an event was maddening. Mr. Seymour had to silence him, by reminding him that in the eyes of the law he had no power over the girl whatever, was not even looked upon in the light of a relative.

CHAPTER XI.

HENA'S OFFER.

· WITH much satisfaction did Hena find herself once more able to walk about, and form one of the family circle. Her great delight was to sit silent and listen to the conversation of others. Mr. Seymour rarely addressed her, but she was content to be in his presence, and drink in the tones of his rich voice, as he talked to Mary. She noticed the delightful familiarity that existed between them, at which she experienced no envy. Mary, to her, was deserving of every bliss, whilst she herself seemed but a poor doomed spirit, longing for a happiness that never could be hers. These sad thoughts brought neither light to her eyes, nor colour to her cheeks; which caused Mrs. Fenton to insist on early hours; consequently, in the midst of any conversation, a glance at Hena's drooping figure and delicate face, instigated an immediate dismissal. Her tremulous good-night

was quite remarkable, as well as her evident reluctance to retire so soon ; still, as no word was uttered in her behalf, she was forced to obey.

"I cannot imagine what pleasure Hena derives from sitting in one position for hours, never uttering a word," remarked Mrs. Fenton, one evening in question, when Hena retired more unwillingly than usual ; "yet she evidently enjoys it, and dislikes being thus summarily dismissed."

"Each individual has their own peculiar task, dear," replied her husband. "For instance, I relish my cigar above all things ; Mary delights in wagging her tongue ; whilst you never tire of your eternal embroidery or crochet. Why then should Hena not relish listening to what is passing around her ? I feel sorry to see the poor girl ordered off as she is every evening."

"Why did you not speak of this before ?" said Mrs. Fenton.

"I should not have done so even now, had you not yourself alluded to it, for the very simple reason that I consider it no business of mine," replied her husband.

From that time forth Hena retired when the family did. As yet she had not had an interview with her brother. De Lorme kept pestering Mr. Seymour to arrange one, who had submitted it to Mrs. Fenton, hoping she might effect it without his interference, as he wished to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with Hena, if pos-

sible. When Mrs. Fenton broached the subject to her, however, she appealed against it so plausibly and pitifully, with such a passion of tears and entreaties not to be forced against her better judgment, that she had not the heart to urge it further; but Mr. Seymour felt its necessity. He well knew the jealous, suspicious nature of De Lorme's love for Hena, even now that he considered her his sister, and divined the conclusions he would draw, unless he could see and judge for himself of her feelings towards him. For this purpose he asked and obtained permission to speak a few words to Hena on the subject. She was sent to him forthwith, and entered the room so shyly that he had to take her hand, and draw her to a seat beside him.

"Hena, you are well and strong enough now to bear an interview with your brother. When shall it be?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour, pray don't insist on such a thing!" she implored in an excited tone. "I never, never want to see that man."

"Forgive our enemies, Hena, as we hope to be forgiven," he said warningly.

"I do forgive him, but I can't forget."

"The one is worthless without the other, my child. Believe me, I would never urge this matter if I did not consider it right and necessary. Consent to see him once more, Hena; then, and then only, will your feelings towards him become softened, when

you find how much he regrets his past conduct, and desires to act a friendly part towards you in the future."

"Mr. Seymour," she said, with quivering lip and tearful eye, "I have lived up to the present moment deserted by those who ought to have protected me. If my principles are not what they ought to be, whose is the fault? I am my poor mother's child, not his who forsook and broke her loving heart. Imagine the intensity of her passion for him, when I, her only child, was but secondary to it. How she must have suffered I only too well know; and never will I demean myself by accepting anything from the hands of those hitherto so tardy in offering it. In some things I have my pride, although in other things I am the reverse." She clasped her hands together, in agony of thought, at how little it would take to place her in the same position as the poor mother she was alluding to.

"How can you be certain of all this, Hena? How can you tell that your mother had not the germs of the malady she died of before she ever met your father?" remarked Mr. Seymour.

"She died in Mitua's house, who knew everything, and adopted me. Ah! Mr. Seymour, I often wonder what I was reserved for,—why, out of pity, was I not taken too?"

"We must never question the decrees of Providence. Try to believe all things are for the best. The sad fate of your mother has no doubt proved be-

neficial in its influence,—has rendered you humble, and I hope good.”

“I am afraid I am not,” she said sorrowfully. “I believe my poor mother’s nature is mine, in many respects.”

“Are you satisfied to remain here, Hena?” inquired Mr. Seymour, anxious to change the conversation, which was becoming personal.

“Perfectly so, Mr. Seymour; nor can I ever forget to whom I owe all the kindness and care I have experienced.”

“You attribute to me more than I deserve; it was Dr. Chaval who suggested the thing to Mrs. Fenton, and her own kind heart that at once acquiesced.”

“Yes, Mr. Seymour, but it was you who prevailed on me to come; I can’t forget that,” said Hena, blushing.

“I am pleased to hear you do not regret it, Hena; and I trust, as I have told you before now, that you will show your appreciation of Mrs. Fenton’s kindness by looking cheerful. There is no earthly use in meeting trouble halfway. Try and make yourself companionable to Mary, who is really much interested in you. Believe me, there is nothing so wearying as to see a sad and woe-begone face continually before one. Will you promise me to remember this, and act upon it?” She did so, scarcely aware how difficult would be the task. “With regard to De Lorme, Hena, I will say no more at present; but of one thing rest

assured, that sooner or later you will have to see him ; I have given him my word to that effect, and you would not have me break it, I am certain."

"I can't bear the thought of it, Mr. Seymour ; would he not be content with a message?"

"I am afraid not ; however, we will see," he replied, as he rose to leave. His adieu was without *empressement*, as his whole bearing had been throughout the interview. Hena did not feel it so much till she was in her own room, when every word of his was recalled and commented upon. When Mary came to seek and hear what had been decided upon, she found her kneeling beside her bed, her face buried from view, which she kindly raised, when traces of recent tears were clearly visible.

"Why, Hena ! surely Mr. Seymour has not insisted on your doing that which seems so disagreeable and repugnant to you ?" she asked in surprise.

"No, dear, he has not done so."

"Then what are you grieving about ? I can't bear to see you so wretched, Hena," said the warri-hearted girl.

"Ah ! Mary dear, you little know the cause of my sorrow ; how should you, indeed, who have everything to render you light-hearted and gay ? May it ever be so, for nothing can be harder than to have to carry an aching heart continually."

"And why should you have to do this, Hena dear ? Your troubles ought to be ended now that you are

well again, unless you have tired of our society, and desire to return to your old home."

"Oh, Mary, how could you suppose such a thing? how very ungrateful you must think me!" said Hena, in evident distress.

"Indeed I do not. What more natural than to be with those you have been accustomed to all your life, I should like to know?"

"Mary, believe me when I say I could be happier nowhere than I am here. Taai is the one I like best of all my old associates, and her I see daily; what more do I need?"

De Lorme was deeply grieved at hearing of Hena's disinclination to speak to him. "There is no doubting her blood," he said bitterly. "She is a true De Lorme, proud and stubborn; and here have I been forming all sorts of plans for her future comfort and welfare. She has cause to dislike me, I know; yet, Seymour, has it brought me consolation, despite my disappointment, and that is the knowledge of her principles after what has occurred. I have no doubt of her passing through dangers scatheless. Love is a fearful enemy to battle against, as I know by experience; yet have I no fears on her account." All this was addressed pointedly at Mr. Seymour, who inwardly laughed at his sophistry. Such subtle reasoning might blind some, but certainly neither of the parties in question. Mr. Seymour was convinced to the contrary, De Lorme partially so.

"Under the motherly guidance of Mrs. Fenton, I believe Hena will prove all you desire," said Mr. Seymour quietly.

"Do you, Seymour? Do you say this on the honour of a gentleman?" he cried excitedly.

"Why, what do you mean, De Lorme?" inquired Mr. Seymour, astonished at this outburst.

"I don't know myself; but I have been worrying about possibilities and probabilities of late to such an extent, that I begin almost to believe them."

"You are certainly the most extraordinary individual, De Lorme, that I remember ever to have encountered."

"Taai has been telling me things about Hena which have quite upset me, Seymour, and given rise to strange misgivings," he replied apologetically.

"The less you encourage that young individual the better, I should say, De Lorme. I never admired the girl."

"I only like her because Hena does. I feel another being when she comes and talks to me about her. She is certainly in her confidence, and oh, Seymour, I am afraid her long illness has made no change in her feelings towards yourself."

"Pray, De Lorme, do not broach this subject," replied Mr. Seymour with dignity.

"But, Seymour, only listen to me now, and I promise never to allude to it again. I know that a word from you will be enough for her guidance; no

one but you has any influence over Hena apparently. With this knowledge you will never take advantage of her feelings, will you?" he asked imploringly.

"And such is mankind," remarked Mr. Seymour, shaking his head gravely; "preaching one way, practising another. You, who would never pause in seducing any man's sister that struck your fancy, feel miserable at the thought of such a fate for your own. My principles do not swerve to suit circumstances, however. You may therefore dismiss all fears as far as I am concerned. I never have, nor ever will, coolly crush a fellow-being. With regard to your sister, I scarcely think her one to be easily led astray. Try to have a better opinion of the sex, my dear fellow; because one grape on a bunch is ill-favoured, we must not condemn the rest, despite mother Eve. Depend upon it, on most occasions man is the tempter. The strength of the one overcomes the weakness of the other; *le voilà*."

The above conversation afforded Mr. Seymour ample food for thought. Nothing new was said, yet it saddened him to think of Hena's sufferings, which caused her to unburden her bosom to Taai, who trafficked on her confidence, as he well knew De Lorme must recompense her for such. He would like to have cautioned Hena, but it was more than he dared venture on doing. The large, mournful-looking eyes, quivering lips, and tremulous voice

whenever he addressed her, were fearful tell-tales; nothing could speak plainer, and at times they touched his heart, perhaps at the very moment when he treated her with greater indifference; at such periods he experienced almost as much pain as he inflicted.

"Do you notice, Mr. Seymour," inquired Mrs. Fenton, one day that he dined with them, "how slowly Hena recovers her former health? I sometimes despair of ever seeing her perfectly well again. Her appetite is miserable, and she coughs frequently now, yet seems to have caught no cold."

"I am sorry to see her continue so delicate," replied Mr. Seymour evasively.

"She has such a wistful expression in her eyes of late, that I at last questioned her; but all I could elicit were tears and sobs. Sometimes I fancy she would like to return home, but fears to be considered ungrateful."

"Did you never ask her?"

"Yes; but she says, not unless I wish her to go, which I, of course, do not, for I have become very much attached to the girl. She has a most yielding, loveable disposition, and I should dread her returning to those people, whom she is so much above in every way. Have you remarked how very fair she has become since her sickness, from being kept out of the sun, I suppose? She is certainly very pretty, such remarkably fine eyes; do you not think so?"

"I must plead a preference for blue ones. Mary's, for instance, are unsurpassable in expression, and I perceive you agree with me."

"Very naturally so, I should say," laughed Mrs. Fenton.

"She will make a lovely woman one of these days, but you must take her to Europe, Mrs. Fenton; do not lose sight of that necessity, pray."

Not a word of the foregoing had been lost on either girl, who stood apart, yet at a convenient distance to overhear without the reproach of prying listeners. The effect on each was striking; whilst Mary blushed, her beautiful eyes beaming with pleasurable sentiments, Hena shuddered, and became, if possible, a shade paler; unknowingly, she coughed repeatedly.

"Come in, Hena!" called out Mrs. Fenton uneasily. She immediately obeyed, although she would have much preferred remaining aloof. Mr. Seymour motioned her to a seat beside him, when he inquired with earnestness whether she was heeding his advice?

"I am trying to do so," she murmured faintly.

"Not very determinedly, I fear, Hena. May I ask what makes you paler, if anything, than ever to-day?" She looked at him reproachfully for an answer. "You ought to be more reasonable, Hena; it makes one quite melancholy to see you thus. I had hoped you would have endeavoured to please me in this respect at least," he remarked with emphasis.

"I have, Mr. Seymour ; but it is so hard, so very hard, to look cheerful when one feels otherwise. If you only knew how anxious I am to please you above everything, you would never reproach me as you do now."

As he looked down on the drooping, quivering figure beside him, pining for what he alone could accord,—when a word, a look, a touch was all-sufficient to brace into renewed life, and which he coldly withheld, through principle,—perplexed him considerably. Her fate, her very life, seemed to depend on his will, yet he hesitated. Why? A doubt of himself, the world's opinion, her *encouragement*, kept him back from taking her in his arms, and soothing her into calmness and peace. He profoundly regretted ever having encountered this pretty sensitive child, with her great loving heart and admiration for himself. Had he been a believer in fate, he might have resigned himself to chance and its attendant, "What is to be will be;" instead of which he had traced out a plan, which he had adhered to up to the present, hoping the result might prove favourable, which turned out the contrary, his avoidance grieving and depressing, when it had been intended to check, convince, and cure. How little he must have known of such natures, whose tenacious clinging resembled a vine entwining itself about some friendly trunk. No wonder he was nonplussed ; his cold exterior but covered a kind, pitying heart, which from its very

depths commiserated Hena. He felt no contempt for her free gift to himself; quite the reverse. It created a greater degree of protective interest in her behalf. The one desire to contribute to her happiness absorbed now his every thought, to effect which he would almost have sacrificed his own scruples.

"A penny for your thoughts!" cried Mary, approaching him.

"I am afraid I cannot gratify you this time, Mary," he said, holding out his hand for hers; "but I am glad you have recalled my wandering senses."

"They could not have been very agreeably occupied, then?"

"Not particularly so," he replied, glancing involuntarily towards Hena's downcast face. She felt the look instinctively, and understood the application of his words. Had she known what was really passing in his mind at the moment, how very different would she have felt and looked that most unhappy of evenings, which she passed in brooding over her wretched lot.

"Well, as I am not very curious," continued Mary, "I will change the theme, for at least one that is more pleasant to me."

"I am all attention, Mary; pray proceed."

"Have you forgotten what to-morrow is to be?" she inquired, blushing up to her eyes.

"Not I, indeed; how many dances are you going to award me, Mary?"

"As many as you please, on one condition."

"Name it."

"Come in the morning, and give us the benefit of your taste in decorating the rooms; I want everything to look well at my party."

"With great pleasure, Mary; I suppose you intend looking very captivating on the occasion?"

"As if I could," she laughed.

The next day he arrived early, and presented Mary with a book of beautiful engravings tastefully bound, it being her birthday. She was all joyousness, rushing hither and thither, attempting much, but effecting little. Taai and Fanny Wells were there also, with several other young natives, arranging flowers, of which there was a profusion lying heaped round. Every now and then a blossom with too short a stem for use, was stuck in one another's head, till they resembled a walking *parterre*; even Hena smiled more than usual, having received a kind look and word from Mr. Seymour, which proved sufficient to render her happy for the rest of the day. No fingers were more deft than hers in forming the fragrant blossoms into gay garlands, which she made a point of herself handing to Mr. Seymour, the contact of whose fingers as he stooped to take them sent a delicious thrill through her whole frame.

"How occupied you seem to be, Mary!" laughed Mr. Seymour, as she stood with flushed cheeks and dancing eyes, contemplating the work of others.

"I am glad you think so, but the fact is I feel too excited to be of use. The opportune arrival of the Admiral with a delightful band has completely turned my usually staid head. Is it not too bad that Hena cannot dance?"

"Surely, if you think so, Mary."

"Mr. Seymour! half the time you seem to be mocking me; you never can give a direct reply nowadays," pouted Mary.

"If you get vexed to-day, you will do so the whole year round, remember?" he retorted gaily.

The decorations were completed, and the evening wore on. Mary was soon dressed, and looked lovely, in a simple white tarlatan flounced with a wreath of natural flowers; Hena, too, was delicately pretty, in an unpretending white muslin made high to the throat. She glided to a corner, unperceived as she thought, but another pair of eyes followed her step, so as to be prepared for what he knew must come that evening, namely, a meeting between her and De Lorme. Soon after the guests began to arrive, he likewise made his appearance and went the tour of the room, bowing to the ladies he was acquainted with, until he at length approached Hena's out-of-the-way seat. He stood before her for a moment scarcely knowing how to act, whilst she sat silent and down-cast, with clasped hands, to silence the wild throbings of her heart. Mr. Seymour had crossed the room, and also stood unperceived beside her chair.

"Hena, give your hand to your brother," he said firmly. She started, and glanced at his face; what she read there caused her to comply. As De Lorme clasped it, his tongue loosed, and he poured forth, *sotto voce*, his regrets for the past.

"I came here, Hena, but to catch a glimpse of you, my sister, whom I glory in so calling. Oh, Hena, bear me no grudge; if you only knew how miserable I have been and am, you would pity me, indeed you would. All I ask is some token of your forgiveness; just now you gave me your hand, unwillingly, I fear. Give it me now of your own free will, and I ask no more for the present. His voice was full of pleadings, and as she timidly looked up in his face, and noted how altered it was since last she had seen it, her heart melted, and she again held forth her small wasted hand—how fearfully shadowy it looked—as it lay for a moment in his; the fingers so slender that he almost feared to press them. He spoke his thanks softly as he bowed low, and slowly quitted her side.

"You will sleep the better for this, Hena, to-night,—for this act," whispered Mr. Seymour, as he likewise moved away.

A ball-room scene was bewildering to one like Hena, who had never before witnessed such a thing, and she felt thankful she had secured a quiet nook near the balcony, where Taai played looker-on, crouched almost at her feet; her great piercing black

orbs peering out and taking in everything that was passing, whilst Hena fell into a dreamy reverie listening to the charming music, which bore her to fairy-land, where she and Mr. Seymour played, of course, a conspicuous part. De Lorme disappeared in an adjoining card-room, where he could feast his eyes on Hena. No words could express his grief at her delicate appearance : she looked scarcely a denizen of the world, so marble-like was her face, so motionless her posture.

“What a pity you can’t dance, Hena!—you look so neglected, sitting here alone,” said Taai.

“I feel far happier beside you, Taai, than amidst that crowd of people whom I don’t know. How beautiful Mary looks to-night, don’t she?”

“Yes, and Mr. Seymour seems of the same opinion; see how he follows her everywhere,” said Taai bitterly.

“He displays good taste; she is in every way worthy his admiration,” replied Hena gravely.

“Then you know that they are to be married; at least everybody thinks that, from seeing him so attentive,” ventured Taai.

“No, I was not aware of this,” said Hena with a sigh; “but I should not be surprised.”

“Or angry, Hena?”

“Why should I, Taai? perhaps long before that I may not be here to experience either sorrow or joy.”

“Why, where do you expect to go to?” asked Taai, surprised.

"Home," replied Hena impressively.

"You don't say so! Oh! Hena, how glad I am, and so will Mitua be; we thought you had abandoned us for more agreeable company," said Taai delightedly. "You don't know how lonesome I have been without you; I never go near the bower, it looks so desolate since you left us, but the old time will come again, when we shall rove the mountains and valleys together as formerly, and you will recover your old looks inhaling the delicious fresh air, which you scarcely breathe here. You who have been so accustomed to live out-of-doors, how can you exist at all, shut up as you have been for these weeks past?"

Hena alluded to a very different home to what Taai supposed; one she now longed to reach, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." She plainly saw she could hope for nothing from Mr. Seymour, and without him life was worthless. How frequently she recurred to her mother's superior happiness; she at least enjoyed the protection and love (transient as it might have been) of the man she adored, and how very willingly would Hena have consented to the same fate had she had the choice. Two years of bliss seemed worth bartering life for; but no, she felt she was doomed to die ungratified: every day her strength decreased, and she knew it, yet sorrowed not, so resigned had she become to whatever might occur. It was scarcely the occasion to refer to such a subject, but the music had

rendered her melancholy and imaginative ; she fancied herself dying, with those she loved best about her couch. Mr. Seymour, in particular, seemed grief-stricken to see her going thus young ; he perhaps regretted his coldness, when the approach of Doctor Chaval and M. Dubois recalled her to the world she lived in, with its many aspirations and disappointments.

“ From all accounts it won’t be long ere we have another festival,” remarked M. Dubois. “ They will make a handsome couple. I fancied something of the sort when we went to the lake together.” Dr. Chaval endeavoured to change the subject, but M. Dubois seemed bent on continually returning to it, even to appealing to Hena for approval, which the poor girl did, with blanched cheek and tremulous voice.

“ You seem tired out, Hena,” kindly interfered the Doctor ; “ better go to bed, child.” She required no second bidding, glad as she was to be out of hearing of the gay laugh and music, now that her head and heart ached to distraction. Taai followed her round the balcony, as she slowly made her escape that way. As they proceeded, they met Mary and Mr. Seymour.

“ Where are you going to ?” inquired the former, kindly.

“ I feel so tired,” said Hena in a low husky tone ; “ Dr. Chaval advises me to go to bed.”

“ Nonsense ; he is an old goose, come along and take some refreshments with us,” insisted Mary.

"Thank you, Mary ; indeed I would rather not, I am not the least hungry or thirsty."

"Do persuade her not to go away so early, Mr. Seymour ; it is not paying a compliment to my party, is it?"

"No, nor her seemingly unamused appearance either, I should say ; really, Hena, I have lost all patience with you ; you scarcely merit the kind attention you receive here ; in Mary's place, I should consider your absence a greater compliment than your presence, carrying, as you do, such a woebegone countenance and indifference of manner. One might suppose you had the trials and troubles of the whole world to bear, instead of a gay scene like this," said Mr. Seymour in a freezing tone, as he drew Mary's arm within his, and walked off, leaving Hena almost paralysed with grief and consternation. He was angry with her, and for the first time had addressed her in cruel words. Taai almost forced her to her room, where she sat down, the picture of despair.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour, how could you address Hena so unkindly?" said Mary reproachfully.

"I could not help it, Mary ; she certainly ought to have assumed a more cheerful appearance, even if she felt it not, on such an occasion," he replied shortly.

"It is so difficult to look otherwise than one feels?"

"Have you ever tried the experiment?"

"No ; and if I had, I am sure I should fail."

"I sincerely hope you may never have occasion to do so, Mary; as to Hena, her dismal face at times irritates me beyond measure." Yet his harshness had been regretted as soon as uttered; he could not forget for a moment, throughout the night, her bewildered look, and low moan of anguish, as he left her alone to direct her steps where she pleased.

"Well, I never thought Mr. Seymour would treat you like that, after all he knows about you," said Taai with marked emphasis, when the door closed; and Hena threw herself on a chair, clasping her hands about her head to still its wild throbbings.

"He hates me, Taai; he absolutely hates me," she exclaimed bitterly.

"How can you waste a thought on the cold-hearted animal," cried Taai savagely, her eyes flashing out fire, enough to have scorched him had he only been in reach of their flame. "Hena, only learn to hate and despise him, as I do," and she spat on the ground as the epitome of contempt.

"For pity's sake, Taai, forbear; it kills me to hear you talk so disrespectfully of Mr. Seymour,—after all, I do deserve his reproaches; he has urged me so often to look cheerful, and Heaven knows I have tried hard enough, but it is useless."

"What! you cling to him still?"

"Yes, and shall so long as I have breath. Do you suppose for a moment his coldness and cruel words could change such feelings as mine? Why, they but

render me more his ; for one of those regards he lavishes so recklessly on Mary, I would do any penance this minute. Oh, Taai ! I wish I was dead and gone, then he might think better of poor Hena."

"Heavens ! how utterly wretched you must be to talk such things, and what tortures you must endure daily ! Come home, Hena, come home, where, if we can't make you happy, you will at least be spared painful scenes !" implored Taai.

"After what has been said to-night, it will be best, Taai," replied the stricken girl, who now concluded her presence to be distasteful to Mr. Seymour ; his words rung in her ears throughout the night, and kept her wakeful. As soon as the guests had departed, Mary sought her room, tired out ; but Hena's frequent cough recalled what had occurred, and decided her on going in and bidding her "good morning." As she bent over to kiss her, she felt her cheeks wet with recent tears.

"Hena, surely you have not been crying all this time about what Mr. Seymour said ; had he known how grieved it would make you, he would never have uttered that cross speech," said Mary, really distressed at finding her so unhappy. She was aware how highly Hena esteemed Mr. Seymour, and what effect a reproof from him would have on her sensitive nature. She scarcely knew what more to say, therefore concluded it was better to leave her to herself. Her mother was awaiting her, to whom she related everything.

"It is a pity he troubled himself about her looks; the girl is very far from well, and can't help showing what she suffers," said Mrs. Fenton; "but good night, dear, and don't keep awake thinking of such nonsense; Hena will have forgotten all about it by to-morrow, or I might say to-day, as it is already daylight."

That afternoon, Mr. Seymour called, with an undefined hope of seeing Hena, and doing away with the construction his words implied, and which she was sure to put them to. He, however, only met Mary, who told him in what grief she had found Hena after the party, and that she appeared to shun every one since. "See what you have done, Sir," she said reproachfully.

"I am really sorry, Mary, for my want of tact, but I think I can easily set it all right again with Hena."

"Oh, of course; you fancy your influence greater than any one else's, perhaps?"

"Very likely I do."

It was not a very difficult matter, keeping out of Mr. Seymour's way; so Hena found, somewhat to her regret, as he made no effort whatever to draw her out of her reserve, until Mrs. Fenton informed him Hena desired to return to her native friends.

"Why, what has given rise to this fancy?" he asked in surprise.

"What you said to her the evening of Mary's party, I verily believe. She has altered materially since

then for the worse. When she first spoke of leaving us, I opposed it decidedly, since which, I think it better to gratify her in anything and everything, for, in my opinion, her health and strength are failing rapidly. I never did have confidence in her temporary improvement, for depend upon it she inherits her mother's disease,—the girl is positively consumptive. Her cough has become dreadful, and her breathing difficult, which leaves me no longer in doubt as to her condition," said Mrs. Fenton decidedly.

Mr. Seymour arose and paced the room ; he was evidently agitated, much to Mrs. Fenton's surprise ; but, after a moment, he recovered his wonted calm, and quietly resumed his seat beside her.

"Mrs. Fenton, can you spare me a few minutes of your time this morning?" he asked in a slightly husky voice.

"As many as you please ; my occupations are far from numerous, as you know," she replied good-humouredly, wondering within herself what was coming next.

"I think you are mistaken, in some measure, about Hena ; she may be a subject for consumption, but I scarcely think she has inherited disease ; her mother's case was induced through great grief, I was told," said Mr. Seymour gravely, "and I believe this is Hena's trouble also. Now, Mrs. Fenton, I want your advice ; knowing this to be a fact, am I justified in making no effort to save her ?"

"Really, Mr. Seymour, you must be more explicit ere I can express an opinion," said Mrs. Fenton, more and more surprised.

He consequently poured into her astonished ear everything: how Hena had become partial to him at an early date, which caused him at once to avoid her society; how circumstances had combined to bring her again to his notice, which had resulted in her almost entirely falling to his care. For this reason he had sought Mrs. Fenton's aid, to relieve him of the really delicate charge entrusted him by her brother, De Lorme. The rest she was familiar with, and certainly had to allow that in neither word nor action had he ever encouraged Hena's tenacious predilection for himself. "You are now acquainted with every circumstance, Mrs. Fenton; and I repeat my question, with the power to renew fresh vitality within her veins, am I humane in thus holding back?"

"Alas! Mr. Seymour, I dare not advise on such a subject; should anything occur to Hena in consequence, I should never forgive myself. You had therefore better see her, and then decide for yourself," said Mrs. Fenton seriously; and without another comment she left the room and called Hena, whom she sent in to Mr. Seymour, whilst she sought Mary to inform her of what had occurred, ere it reached her ears through another source. She found her combing out her long beautiful hair, totally unconscious of the close proximity of one she esteemed

so highly ; otherwise, the probability was she would have interrupted the *tête-à-tête* long before. A glance at her mother's face told her something was wrong, and, throwing back her hair, she flew to her side, inquiring what had happened ?

" Nothing of very great moment, although it will surprise you no less than it has done me, I think, Mary," said her mother, trying to disguise her fears as to how the news would be taken by her darling child.

" Do you know, I think Hena will be married soon ?"

" Is it possible ? Well, I shall be very glad if it only render her happier, poor girl ; but who is the gentleman ?"

" Somebody you would never dream of, Mary, which proves how little we understand what is passing in the mind of those we are most intimate with."

" Do be quick, Mamma ; I am dying of curiosity." And Mary, who began to feel a sinking about the heart at her mother's strange remark, which seemed to be applicable but to one of their visitors.

" You have guessed the person to whom I allude, my child," said Mrs. Fenton, noticing her pale cheeks and compressed lips ; " Mr. Seymour has been with me for some time, and Hena has now replaced me."

" Oh ! Mamma dear, how can it be possible ? There surely must be some error," gasped Mary, perfectly bewildered.

"Why should there be, my darling? I knew very well that you have enjoyed Mr. Seymour's society excessively, and I believe he was attached to you as an old friend might. Did he ever give you reason to suppose more than this, Mary?" inquired her mother anxiously.

"No, Mamma, never! I was so happy as things were, that I never dreamed of a change. Now he will prefer Hena to me; it is that thought which I cannot endure," sobbed Mary.

"Thank God, you are but a child in feeling as well as years, my Mary; your very words reassure me," said her mother, clasping her tenderly in her arms.

"Has he always loved Hena, Mamma?"

"No, my dear; and now you shall hear all he told me." Kneeling beside her mother, her head resting on her lap, she listened attentively, nay breathlessly, to every word, which tended but to exalt her paragon the more in her estimation.

"Poor Hena!" she said at length, raising her head, "how dreadful it must be to marry any one who does not really love you!"

"We must hope that such is not the case," said Mrs. Fenton, although she entertained her doubts also.

After the first surprise, Mary began to feel very desolate, although she did not in the least envy Hena, —on the contrary, could not help pitying her in her heart. Yet she had so counted on Mr. Seymour's preference, that it was like depriving her of some-

thing near and dear to forego the pleasure of his society, as she supposed would now be the case. Her mother, at her earnest request, left her alone, when the poor girl wrung her hands in despair at this her first great sorrow. She walked up and down the room, mourning and weeping bitterly, until she began to recall what her mother had told her. It was true, that Mr. Seymour's sorrow at Hena's sufferings induced the step he was taking. The knowledge of this helped to calm her more than anything else; it seemed to her like such a noble sacrifice, that she felt she could have adored such a man, so truly good and unselfish.

"It was not long before Hena joined Mrs. Fenton, when she knelt beside her, and looked timidly in her face.

"Are you displeased?" she asked, in a low tremulous voice.

"Why, Hena, how could you suppose such a thing?"

"I feared you might be, for I doubt myself whether I am right in consenting so readily to his proposals; but oh, Mrs. Fenton, how could I turn from that which I have craved for so long, so very long! If you only knew how I have hoped and prayed for this moment! I trust I shall not be punished for my repinings. I tried not, but it was stronger than my will. My face would reflect my feelings in spite of me. I never dreamed of his marrying a girl like me.

How could I expect such a thing? I should have been only too happy in the knowledge that he cared a little bit for poor Hena; whereas now, blessings without number seemed showered on me. Do I deserve them, Mrs. Fenton?"

"I hope so," said Mrs. Fenton, deeply affected by the passionate tone and humble mien. "You must endeavour to please your husband in all things. Married life is not always *couleur de rose*, my child. Oftentimes you may be called upon to give in your opinion; do so uncomplainingly, for, if I mistake not, Mr. Seymour is a man who means to have his own way through life."

"I always have tried to please him, though sometimes I have failed," said Hena sadly, as she recollected his late reproaches; "but oh, Mrs. Fenton, what should I do if he ever got very angry with me? It would terrify me to death, I think."

"Avoid giving him any reason. And now, Hena, go and lie down; you have had excitement enough for one day," said Mrs. Fenton kindly, stooping and pressing her lips to the still kneeling girl's brow. That evening, Mr. Seymour thanked Mrs. Fenton for her friendly counsel to Hena. "I hope neither of us will have occasion to regret the step we are taking. I think I can satisfy her if she does not demand too much. Fortunately she has a yielding disposition, upon which I count in effecting many changes."

Mary was perfectly collected when she joined the

family ; beyond looking a degree paler, nothing was noticeable ; and, to her great surprise, she found Mr. Seymour as kind and attentive as ever, and Hena in her old place, playing listener. Occasionally Mr. Seymour addressed her some commonplace question ; which drew forth a scarcely audible answer ; but she looked happy. And so she was ; never in her life had she experienced such a feeling of peace and entire satisfaction as now. All night she lay awake, dwelling on his every word and gesture with a thrill of delight. Even Mary, for the time, was forgotten. So selfish had she become in her perfect happiness, that she quite overlooked its being the source of sorrow to another, and that other her friend whom she loved only next to one ; when towards morning she fell into a troubled sleep, visited by strange dreams, she awoke to find Mary beside her.

“ Lazy girl ! it is long past breakfast-time,” she cried, with forced gaiety, when, to her astonishment, Hena threw her arms about her neck, and cried so bitterly that it seemed to shake her whole frame.

“ Oh, Mary dear, what a selfish creature I have been in my great joy ! I thought of nothing else,” she sobbed hysterically.

“ And why should you, Hena ?” said Mary soothingly. “ Why, I thought you had wept your last from yesterday. Have you not all your heart desires ?”

“ Yes, and more ; my brightest dreams never pre-

sented such perfect bliss as is in store for me ; but you awoke me from such a wretched one a little while ago, Mary," said Hena, while the large drops of perspiration stood like beads on her brow. "I thought it was my wedding day, and when we approached the altar a coffin was there, which they said contained nothing ; but when I looked in, there you lay, so still and white. Oh ! Mary, I think I had not better marry Mr. Seymour."

"Why, Hena ? Is it possible that you do not care for him after all ?" asked Mary in surprise.

"No, I do not care ; but I adore the ground he walks on, the clothes he wears, the articles he touches, the air he breathes !" she said passionately. "Has he not possessed my every thought since the day I first saw him ? What changed me from what I was to what I am, a mere shadow ? His avoidance. I thought he loved somebody else and disliked me, the idea of which was killing me by inches ; but I was glad, because I fancied, when dead, he might feel sorry for treating me so coldly, so indifferently,—he who knew I worshipped but him,—would rather receive one kind word than a thousand from any one else,—would rather have been his slave than any one else's wife. Yes ; I had given my heart, and he could have had my soul for the asking. What do you call this all-absorbing passion, liking or adoration ? And all this weary, weary time, he made me no return, either by look or word. Oh !

what agonies, what tortures, has his indifference cost me ! But it is over now. I am to be his wife ; imagine that ; his own wedded wife, half-caste that I am."

She had to stop for want of breath, while Mary stood aghast at such an outburst from the usually silent girl, whom they had thought incapable of violence of any sort. The momentary enthusiasm had passed, and she lay back, panting and trembling.

"You ought not to excite yourself thus, Hena," said Mary warningly ; "it is very wrong and injurious. What would Mamma say to have heard you so express yourself ? And I am certain Mr. Seymour would disapprove likewise."

"I was wrong," she said meekly ; "but I was anxious, Mary dear, to convince you of the extent of my love. I could live for him, but must have died without him."

Taai was both astonished and pleased, for Hena's sake, when told of what was in store for her, although she regretted it on account of many other reasons. She never had liked Mr. Seymour, and doubted his capacity to render Hena happy ; and so she told Matoha, who escaped to the woods, there to hide his very natural anguish at an eternal separation from the girl he still loved with all the force of his passionate nature. Although he had worked for this end, it did not lessen his sincere grief when he thought how happy he could have made, her had she only fancied him as she did this stranger.

De Lorme was informed of what had taken place by Mr. Seymour himself, before whom he had to disguise his feelings and appear gratified, whereas in his heart he cursed his fate; denied Hena himself, he wished no one else to enjoy her, and had already formed plans to have her immured in the convent, where he intended paying the amount necessary for her reception; but, as in everything, he had undertaken in her cause, his plans had been foiled by his former friend. He now threw off all trammels, and at once rushed into the vortex of dissipation, which his love for Hena had hitherto kept him from.

END OF VOL. I.

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